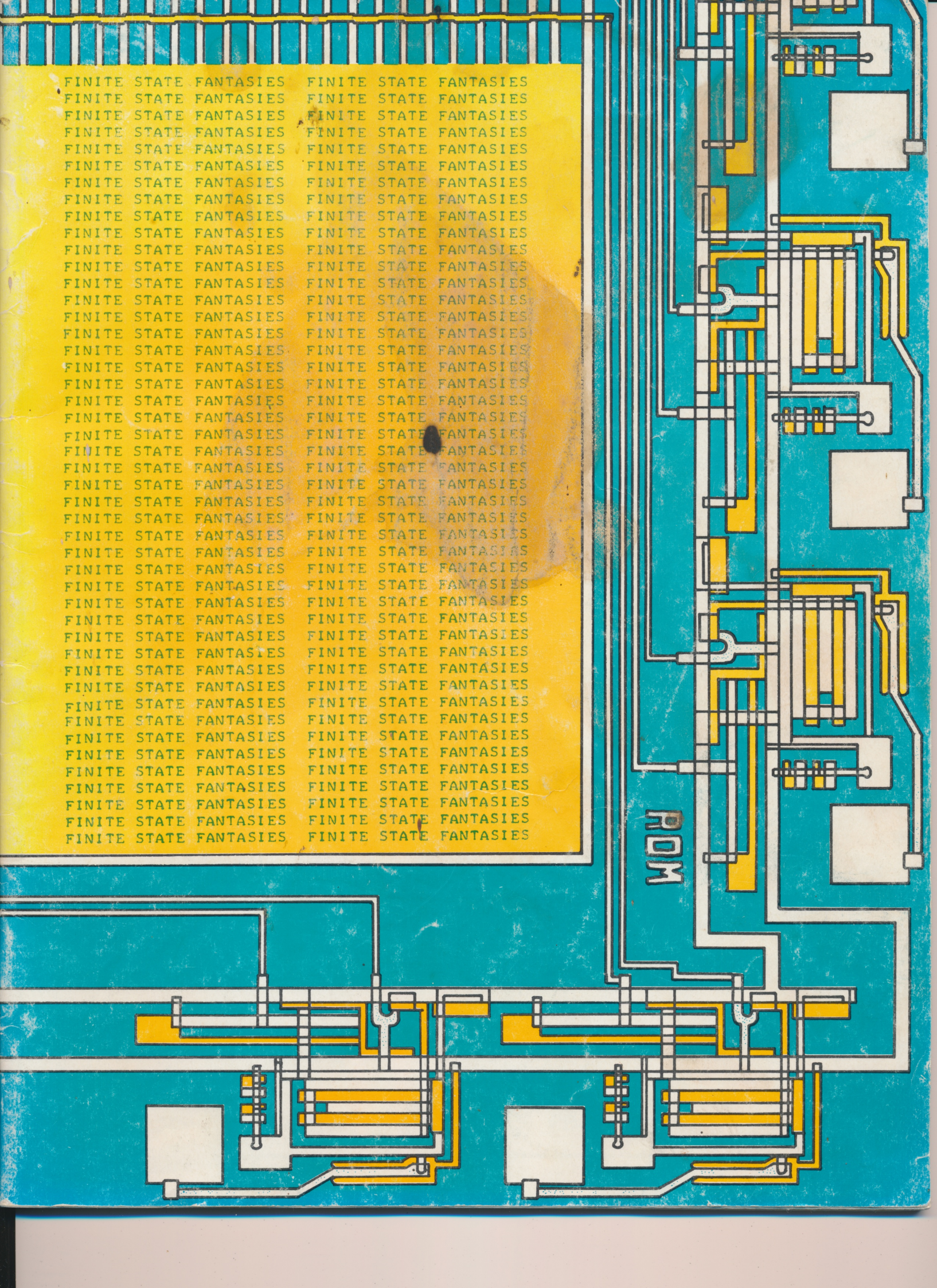
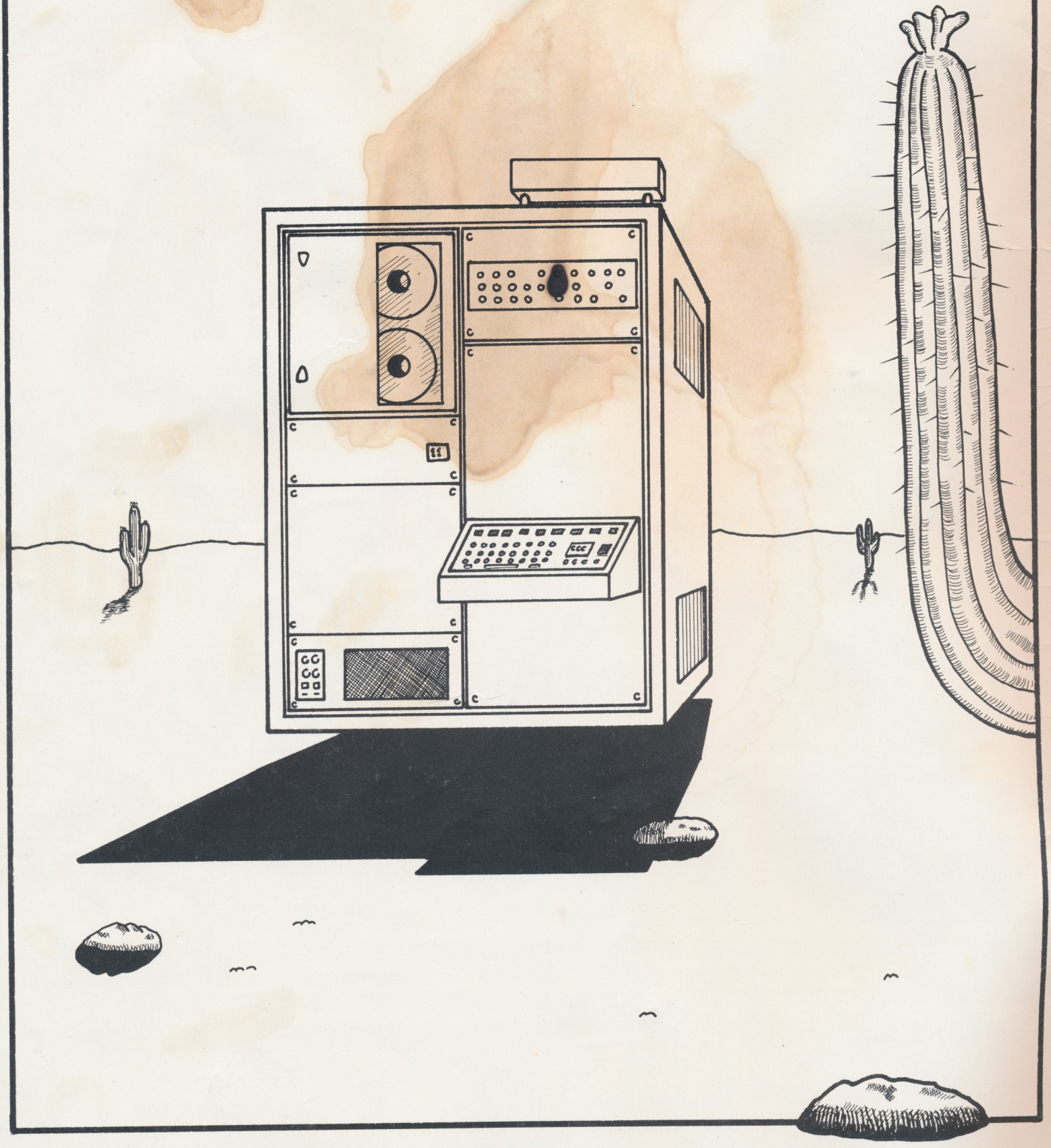
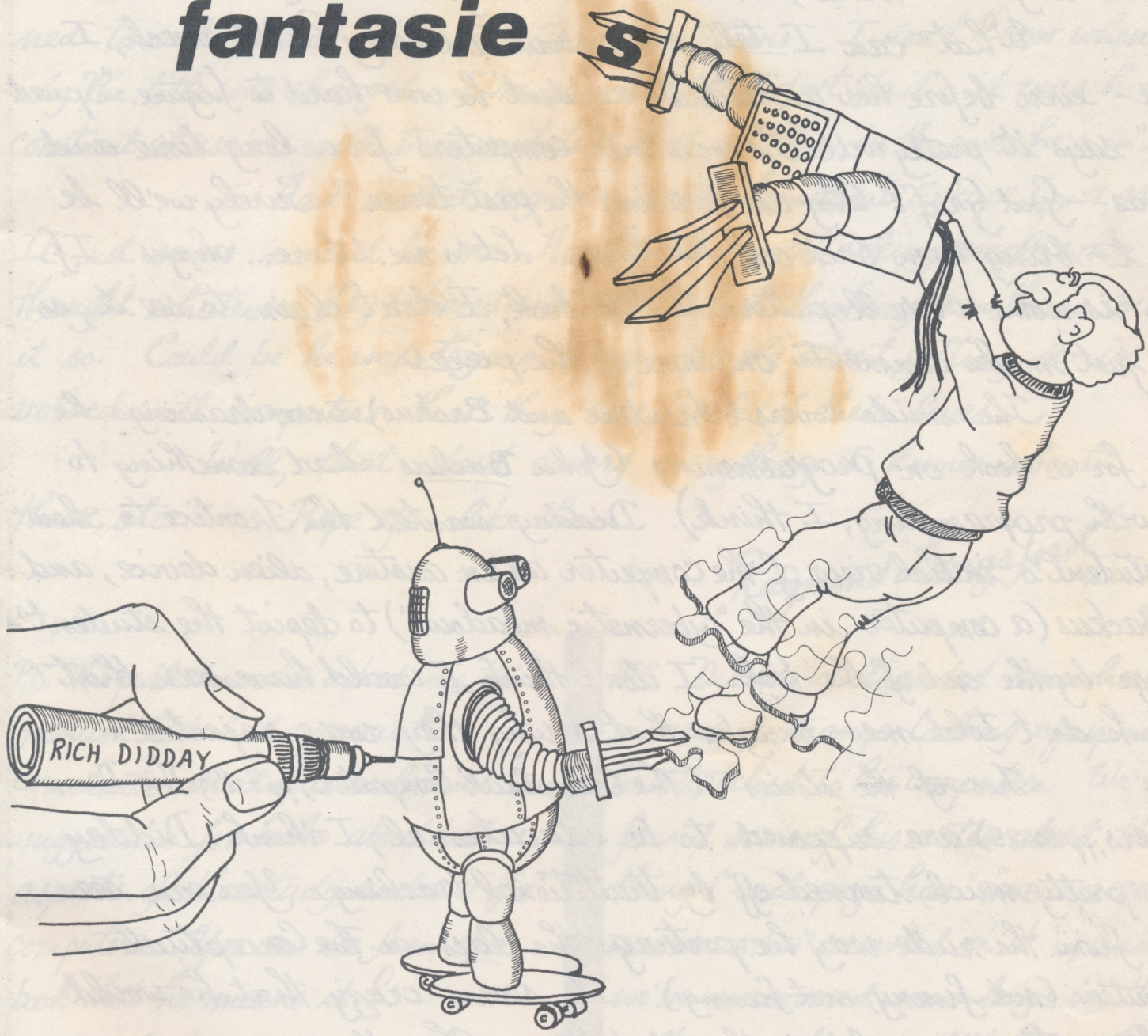

FINITE STATE FANTASIES FINITE STATE FANTASIES
ROM

FRONTICE



finite state fantasies



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CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820

The publisher has asked me to write an introduction to this collection of graphic stories by my old friend, Rich Didday. I don't really have much to say, but since Didday is in no shape right now to explain what he means, I guess I'll have to give it a go. Besides, I need the money.

What can I tell you about Didday? Not much, I guess - even before his unfortunate accident he was hard to figure. "Spaced out" says it pretty well. He was into computers for a long time and he was — Good Grief! Why am I using the past tense? Surely we'll be able to bring him back out... I hope... Let's see. Where... oh, yes. If there is some overall pattern to this book, I don't claim to see it, so I'll just make comments on some of the pieces.

The inside covers (Frontice and Backus) were drawings he did for a book on programming (John Backus had something to do with programming, I think). Didday wanted the Frontice to show the student's initial view of the computer as an austere, alien device, and the Backus (a computer in the "cybernetic meadow") to depict the student's image by the end of the book. I don't think I would have seen that if he hadn't told me - maybe that's why they were rejected.

Two of the stories (The Conceptual Computer, pp 7-15; The De-Buggers, pp 20-25) are supposed to be educational, I think. Didday was pretty much turned off by traditional teaching. You can see that from the rude way he portrays the class in The Conceptual Computer (not funny, not funny). It seems crazy that he would think cartoons would do the job better. Oh well.

The drawing on page 36 isn't really a dream — it's something he did in graduate school. In fact, I was there when the woman destined to become his ex-wife took one look, stared at him, and

said, "Are you the type who does things that are supposed to mean something?" He went into one of his moods.

He showed me Princess Batrachos (pp16-19) right after he finished it. Seemed to expect me to see something in the name. I suppose if I had a dictionary I might look it up... then again...

Lots of the stories involve transmutations, and he planned to call the book Finite State Transformations. I don't know when or why the title was changed. I'm sure Didday didn't do it - it was his constant obsession with transmutation that got him in the mess he's in now.

I had several arguments with him about Escape (pp37-44). It just seems morbid to me. He was always attacking people who thought whatever they believed was real, that thinking something made it so. Could be he was trying to warn people about getting so involved with computers that they lose track of their lives...

Well, that about covers everything I know about these stories. Hope you like them.

Raymond Langsford

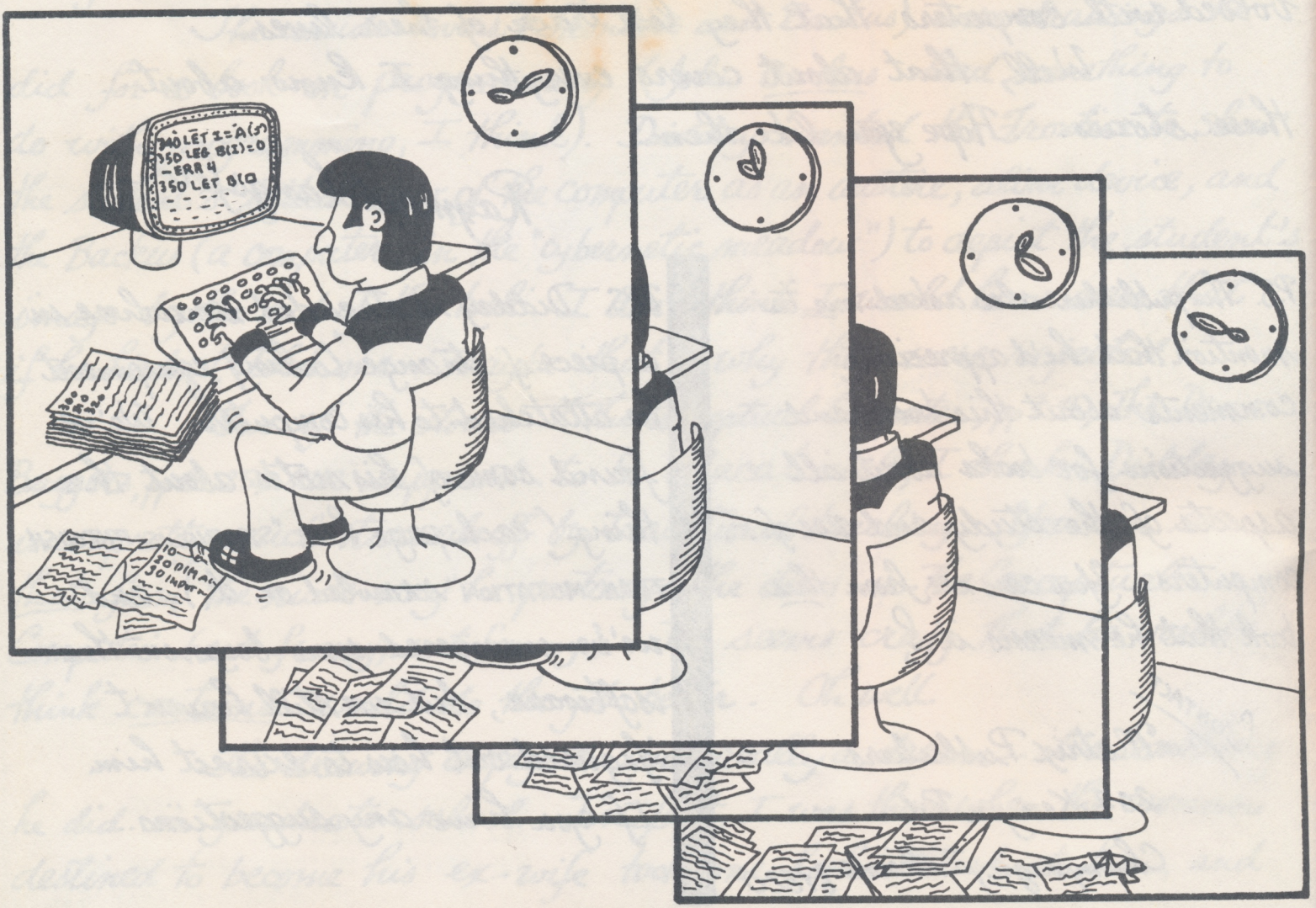
P.S. The publisher also asked me to mention that he'd appreciate comments about this book and suggestions for books about all aspects of the study and use of computers. You can see from this book that he means it!

CONTACT
Matrix Publishers
207 Kenyon Rd
Champaign, Illinois 61820

P.P.S. Didday is stranded somewhere in a piece of strange looking equipment he attatched to his computer. We've found some of his notes about the thing (each page has "SYMBIOSIS THROUGH TRANSMUTATION" scrawled on it), and we've uncovered some bugs in the software, but we still haven't figured out how to extract him. If you have any suggestions...

data entry

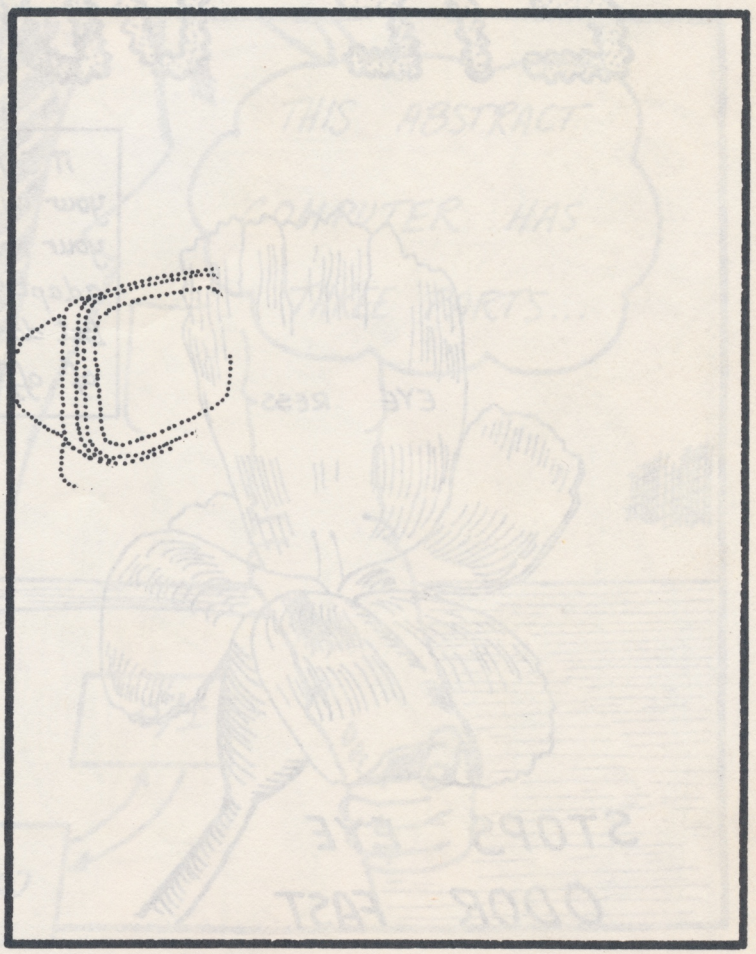
and exit



73900 PRINT"#"
73910 END

NO! NOT THAT BUTTON!
YOU'LL WIPE...
BUFFER FULL
PURGE (Y or N)
?

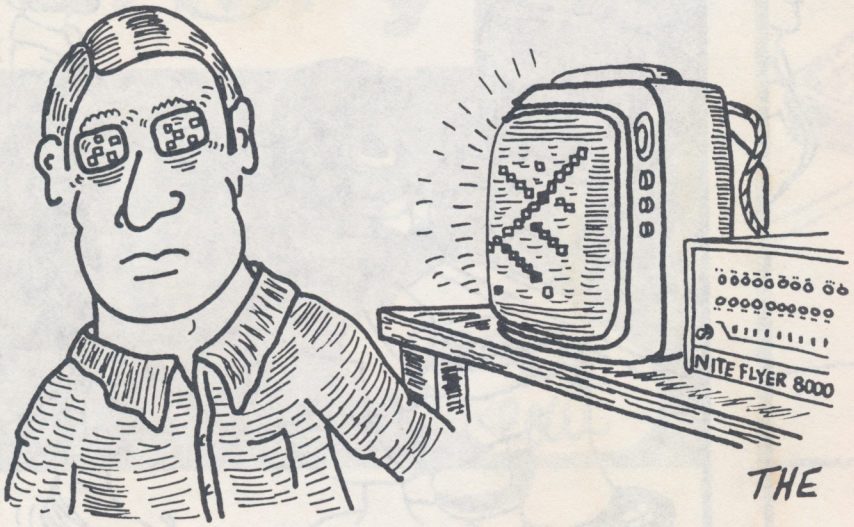
EVERYTHING OU...
PURGE BEGUN



STOP and THINK!

recognize these symptoms?

DO YOU EVER COMPLAIN OF "DAZZLER EYES"?



DO YOUR FRIENDS SEEM TO AVOID YOU AFTER YOU'VE SPENT SEVERAL HOURS IN FRONT OF YOUR CRT?

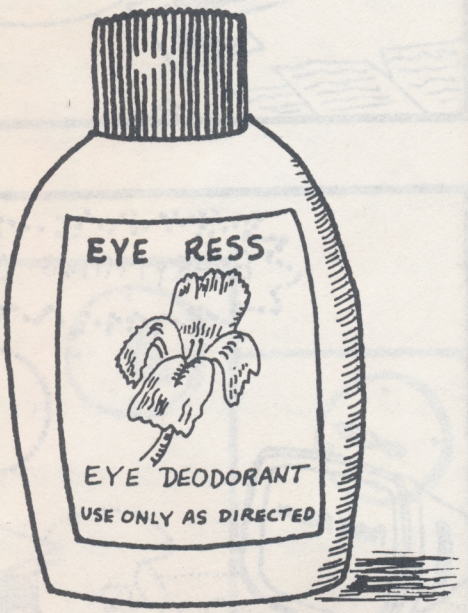
IF SO,

YOU MAY BE ONE OF

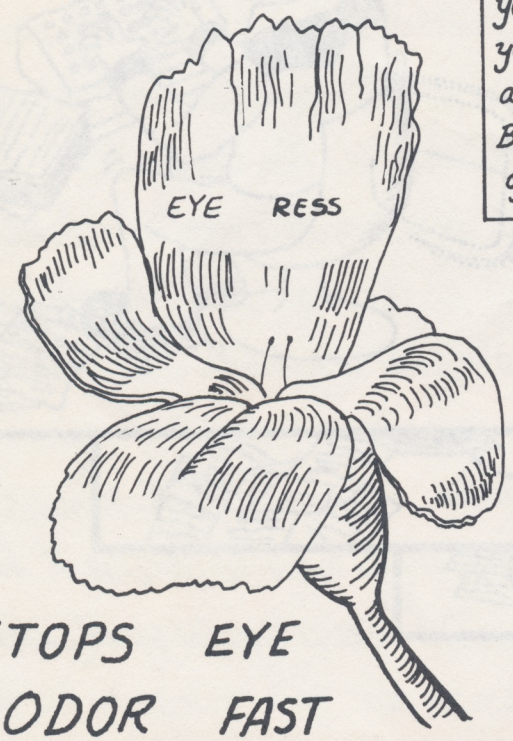
THE UNTOLD MILLIONS

WHO SUFFER THE HEARTBREAK OF

EYE ODOR



IT'S A SCIENTIFIC FACT! your eyes are so close to your nose that you quickly adapt to their smell — But don't take the risk of offending others!



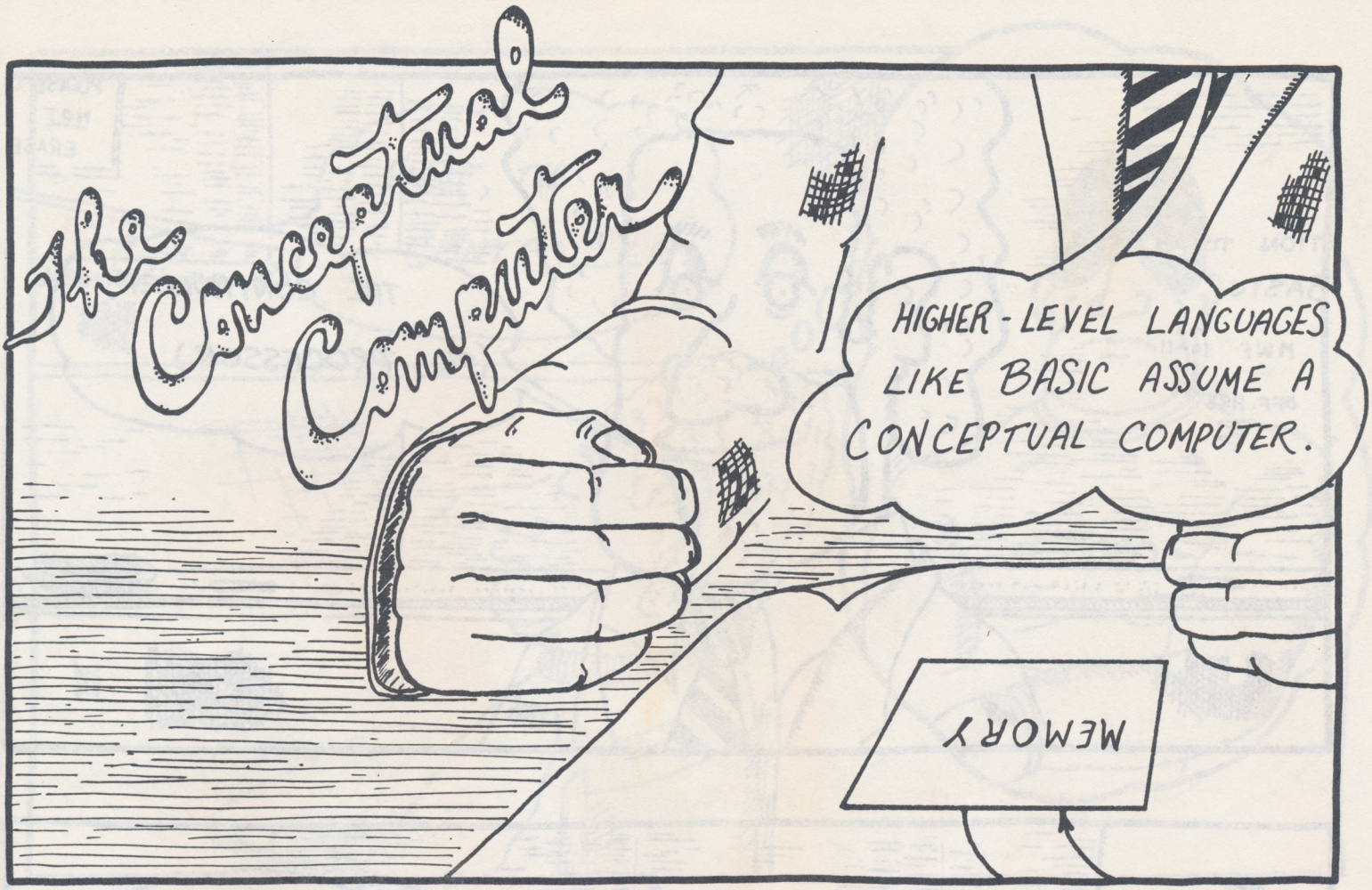
STOPS EYE ODOR FAST

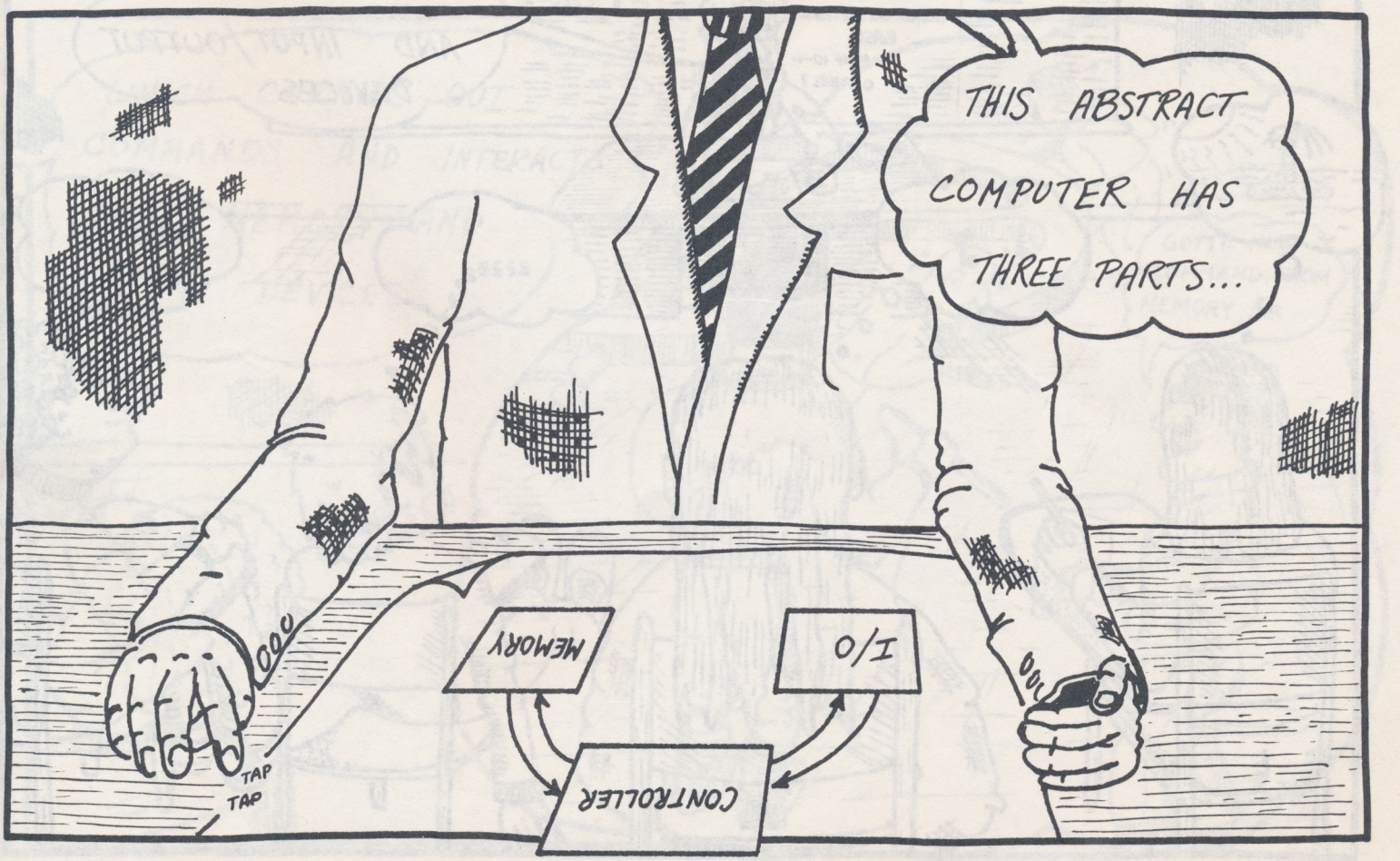
50¢ OFFER EXPIRES MARCH 27, 1958 50¢

SAVE ON YOUR NEXT PURCHASE OF EYE RESS EYE DEODORANT

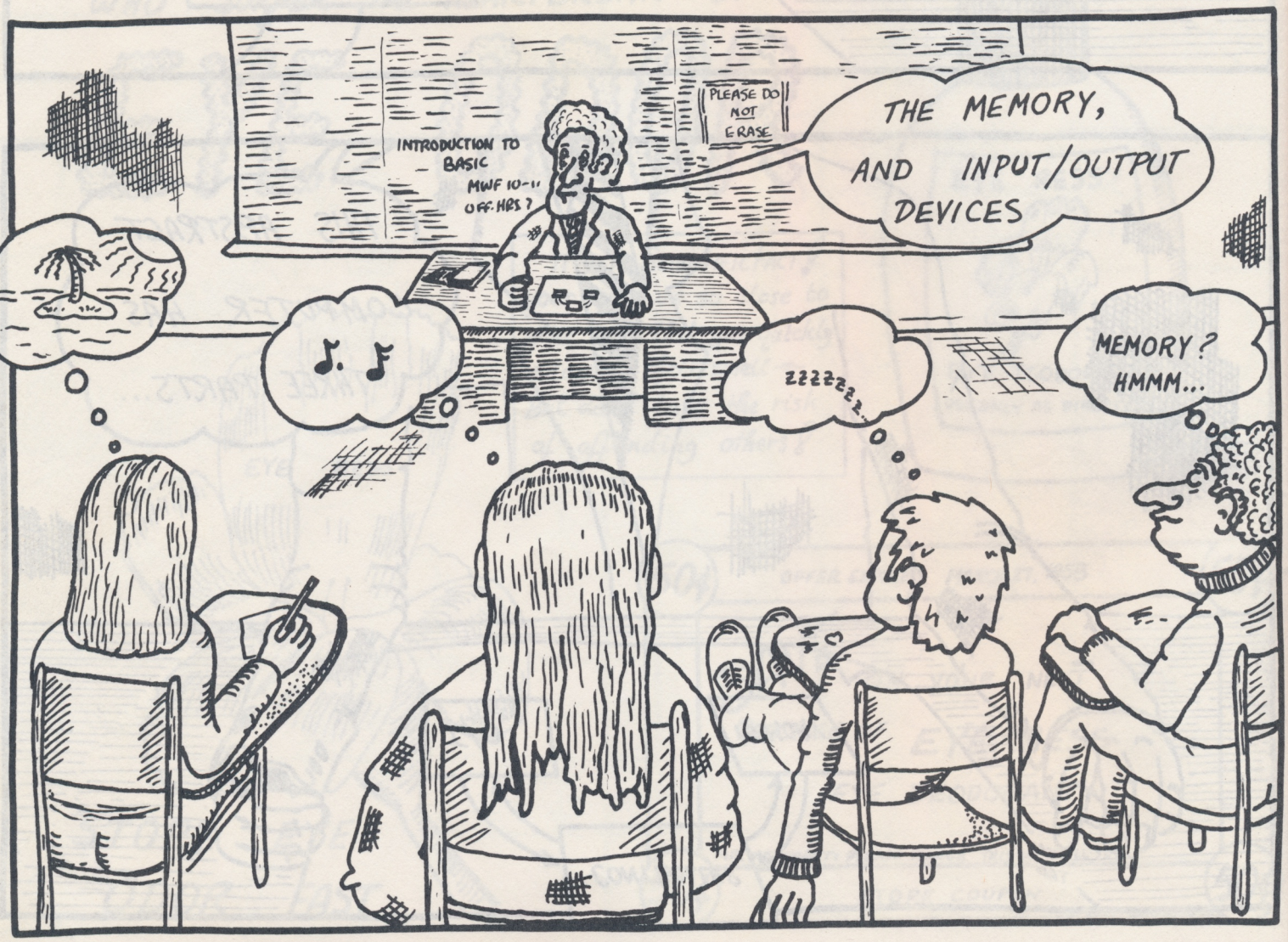
MR. MERCHANT: PLEASE HONOR THIS OR WE'LL SUE.

50¢ STORE COUPON 50¢

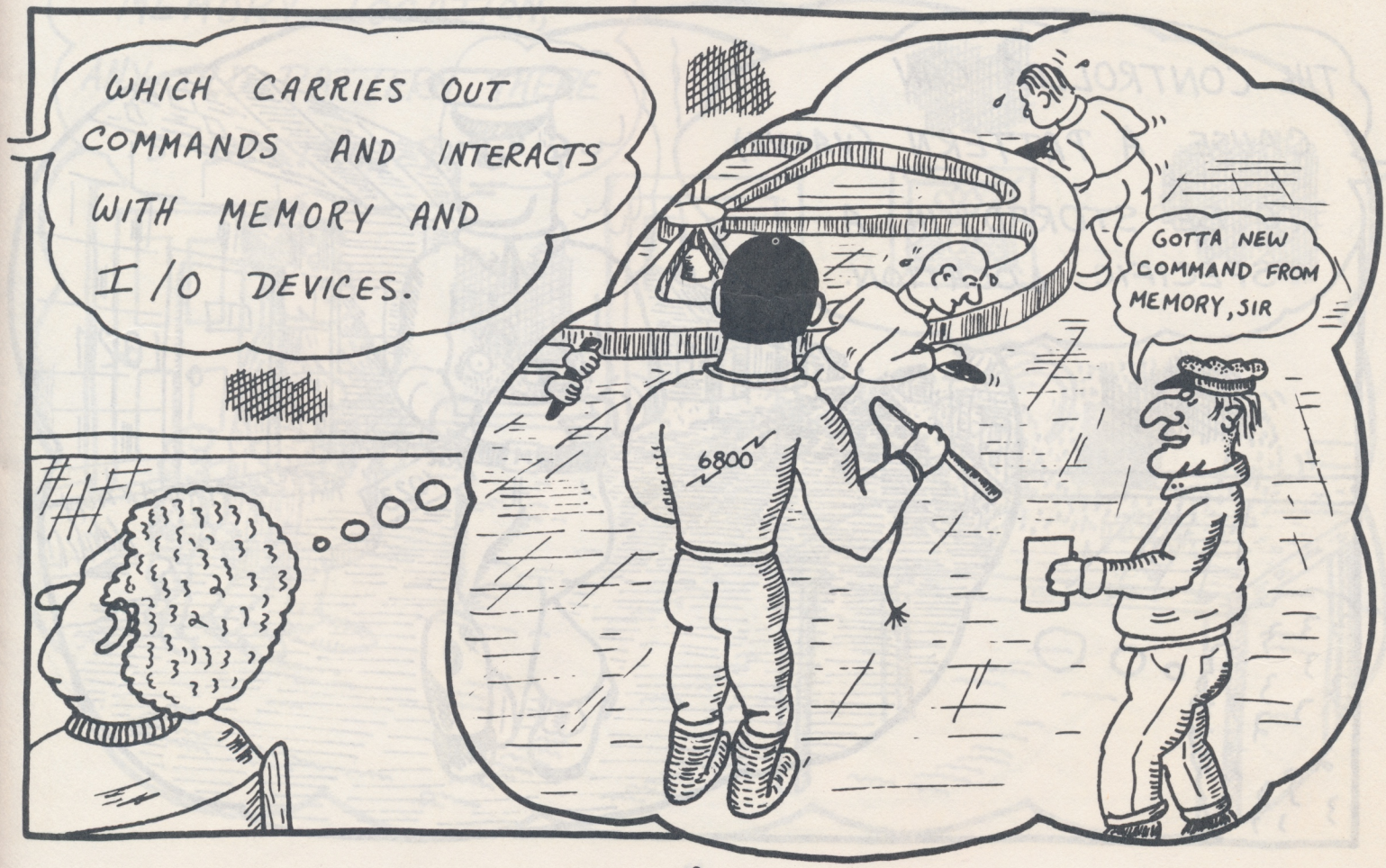

The Conceptual Computer
HIGHER-LEVEL LANGUAGES LIKE BASIC ASSUME A CONCEPTUAL COMPUTER.
MEMORY

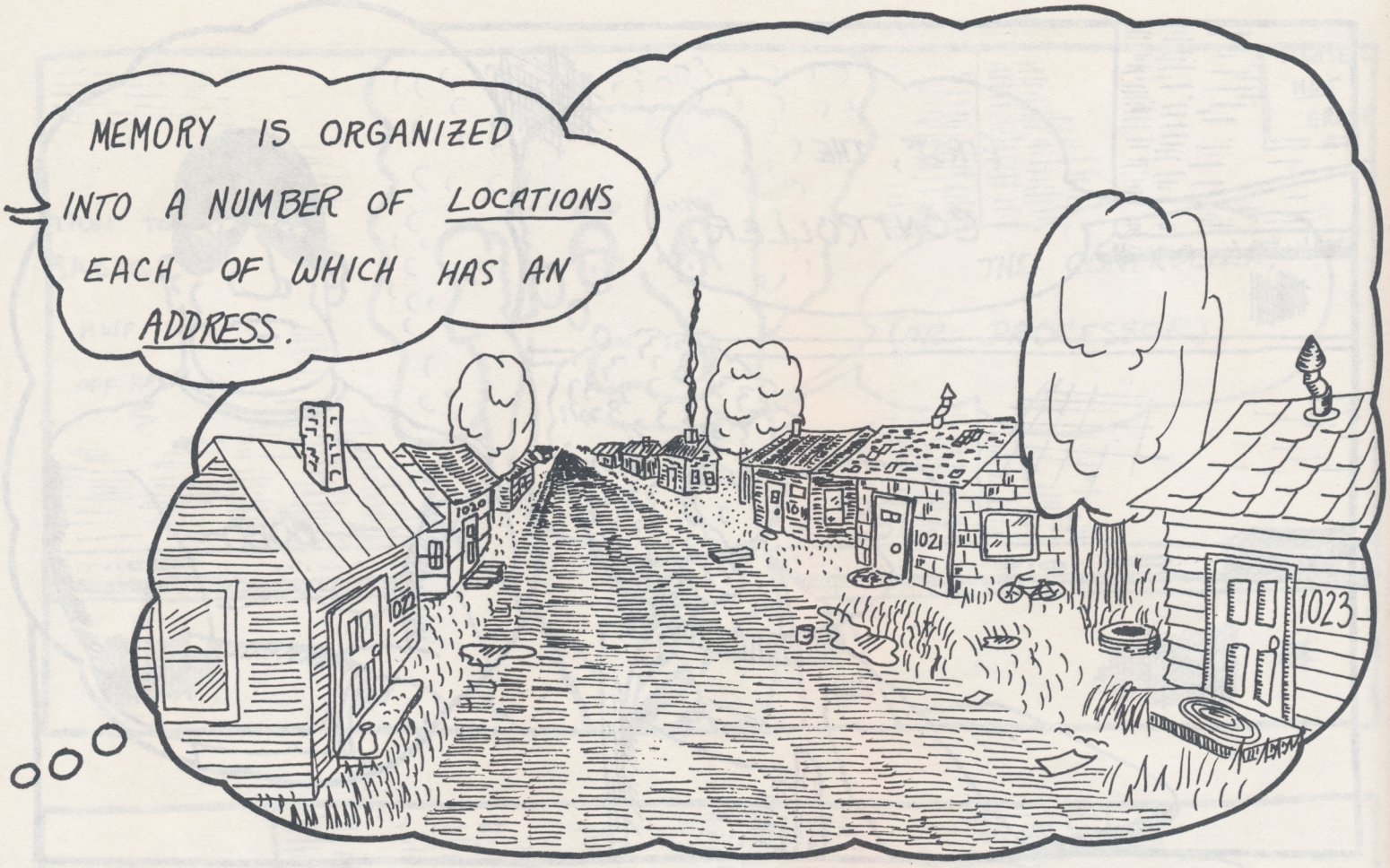

THIS ABSTRACT COMPUTER HAS THREE PARTS...
MEMORY
I/O
CONTROLLER
TAP
TAP

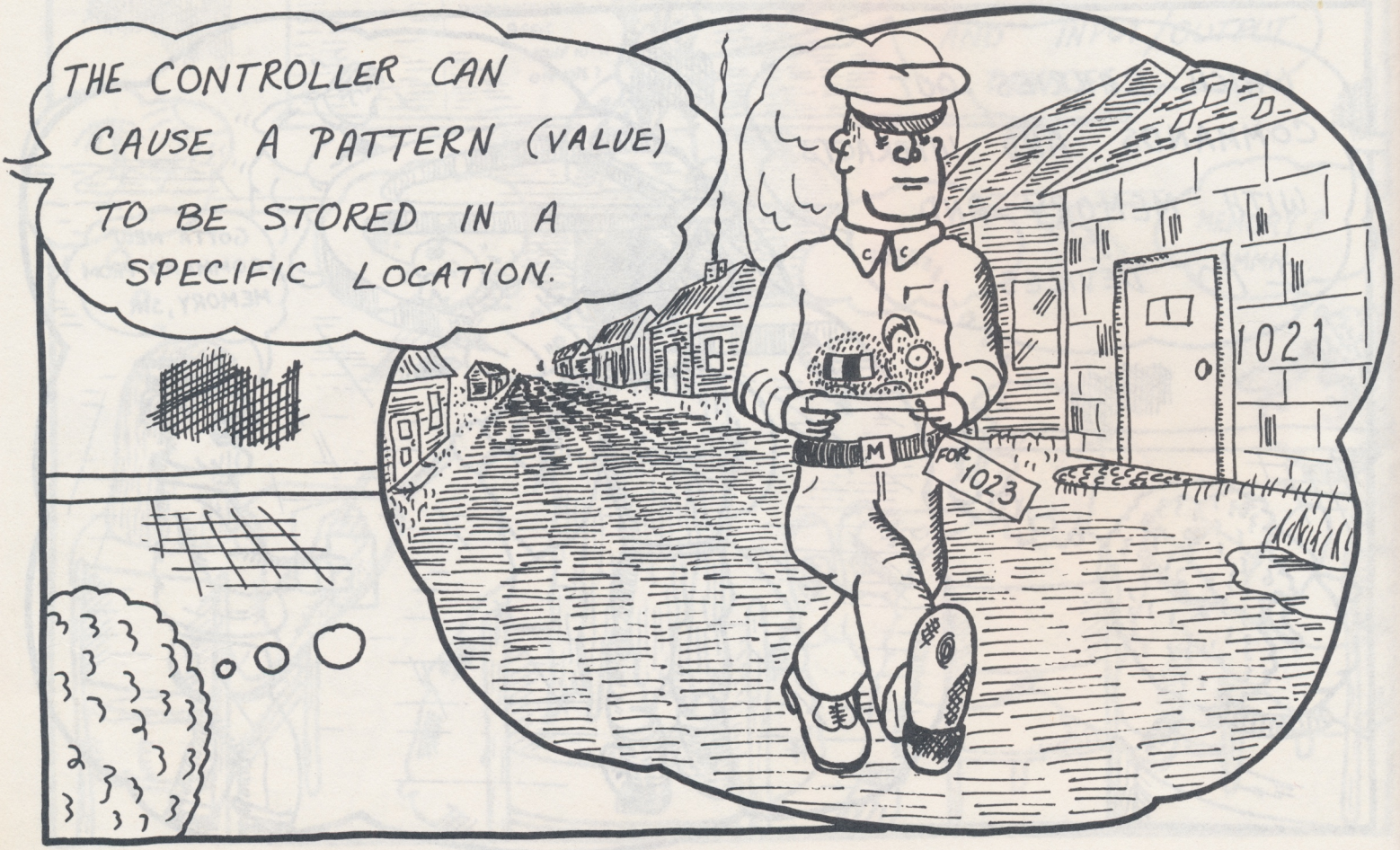
TION TO
BASIC
MWF 10-11
OFF. HRS?
PLEASE
NOT
ERASE
THE CONTROLLER,
(OR PROCESSOR)


INTRODUCTION TO
BASIC
MWF 10-11
OFF. HRS?
PLEASE DO
NOT
ERASE
THE MEMORY,
AND INPUT/OUTPUT
DEVICES
♪ ♪
ZZZZZZ...
MEMORY?
HMMM...

FIRST, THE CONTROLLER,
8080

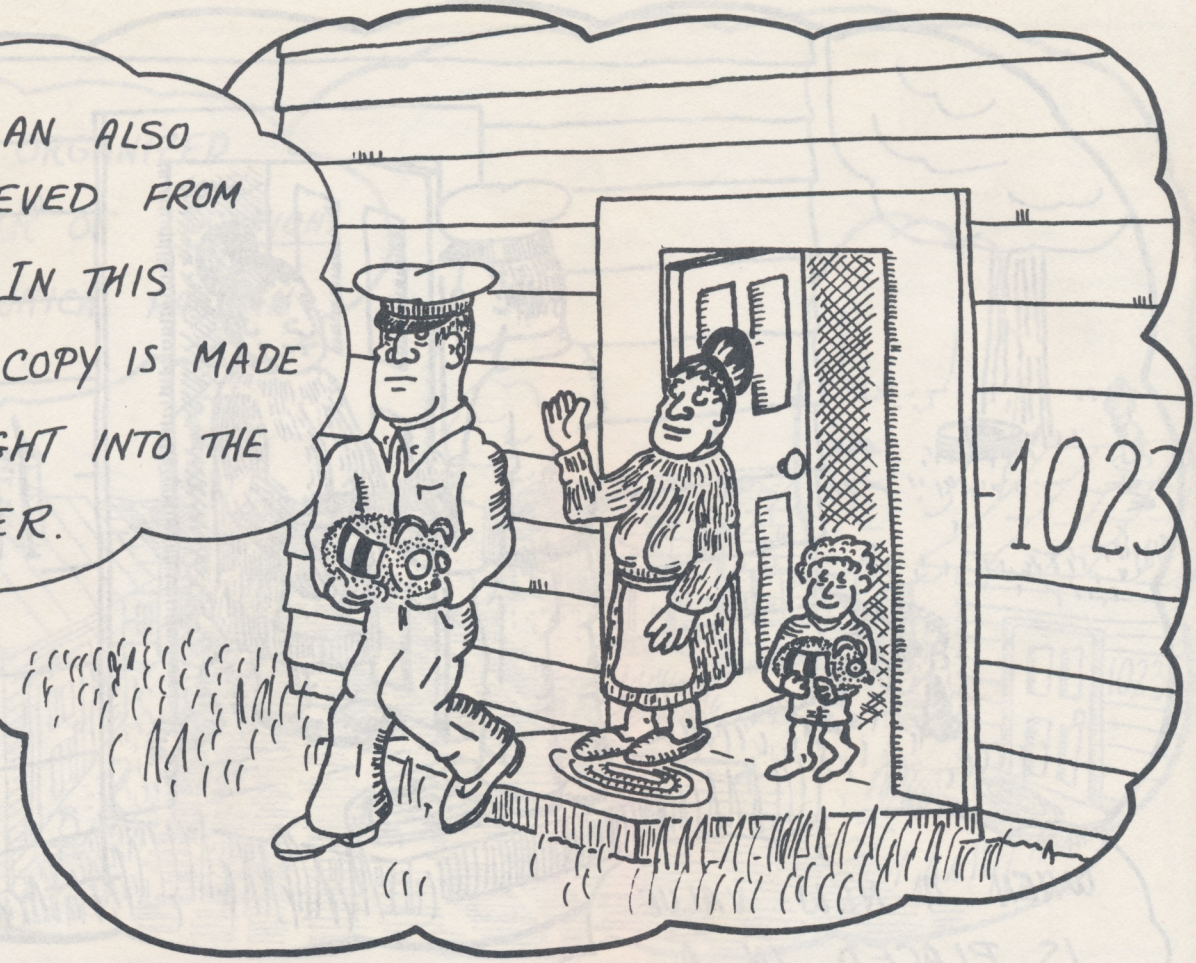

WHICH CARRIES OUT COMMANDS AND INTERACTS WITH MEMORY AND I/O DEVICES.
6800
GOTTA NEW COMMAND FROM MEMORY, SIR


MEMORY IS ORGANIZED INTO A NUMBER OF LOCATIONS EACH OF WHICH HAS AN ADDRESS.
1021
1023

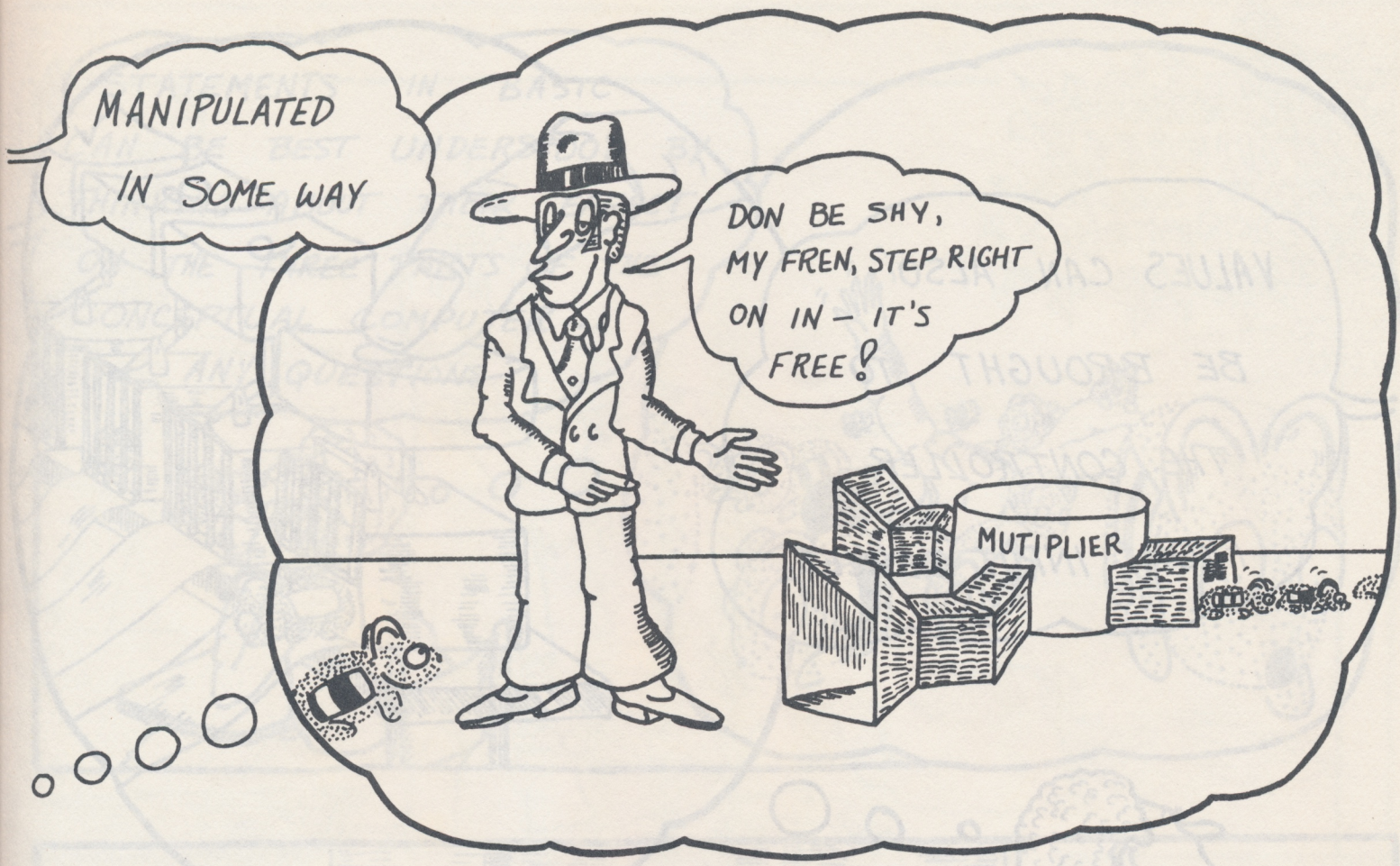

THE CONTROLLER CAN CAUSE A PATTERN (VALUE) TO BE STORED IN A SPECIFIC LOCATION.
M
FOR 1023
1021

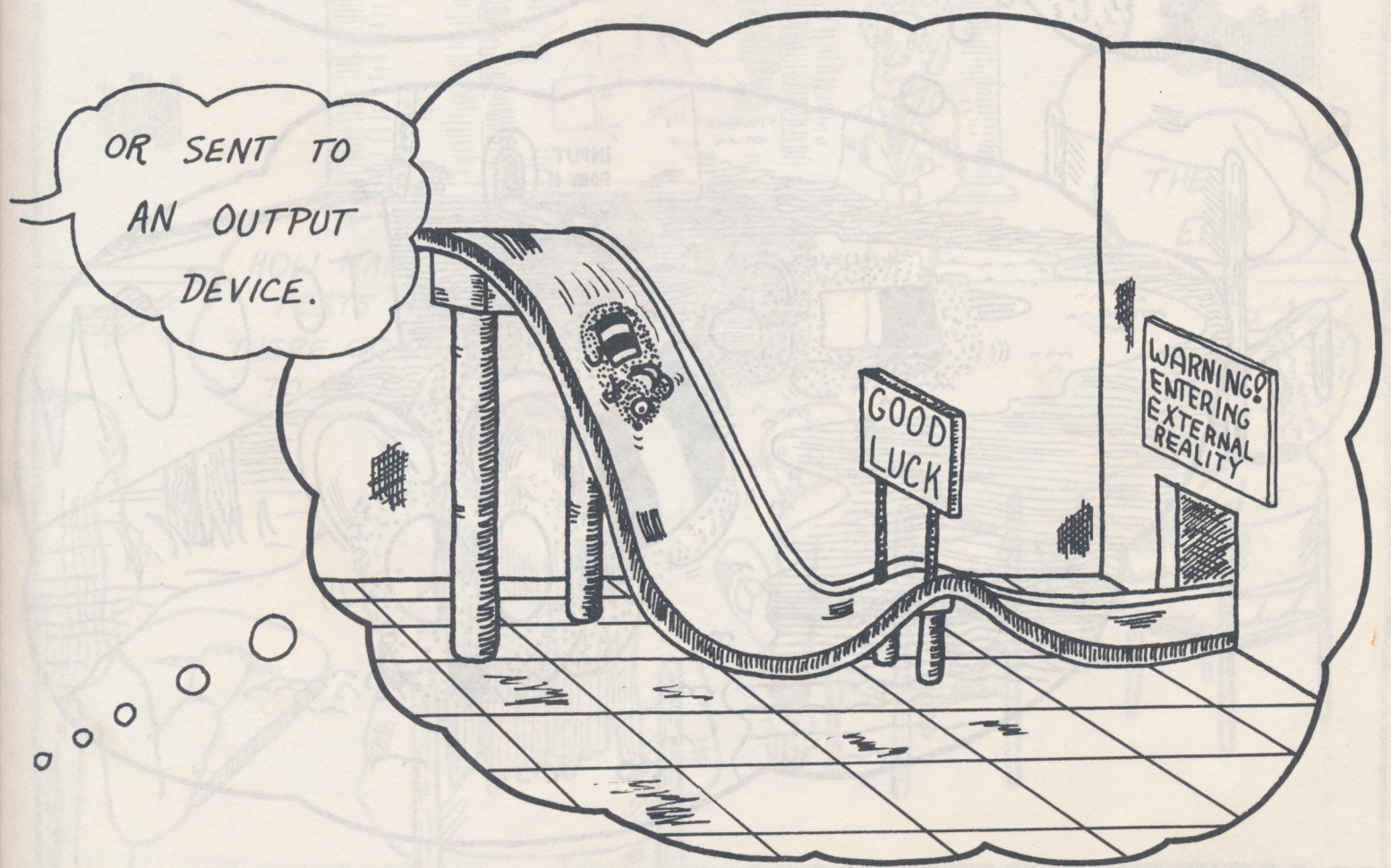
1023
WHEN A NEW VALUE IS PLACED IN A MEMORY LOCATION, ANY OLD PATTERN THERE IS DESTROYED.

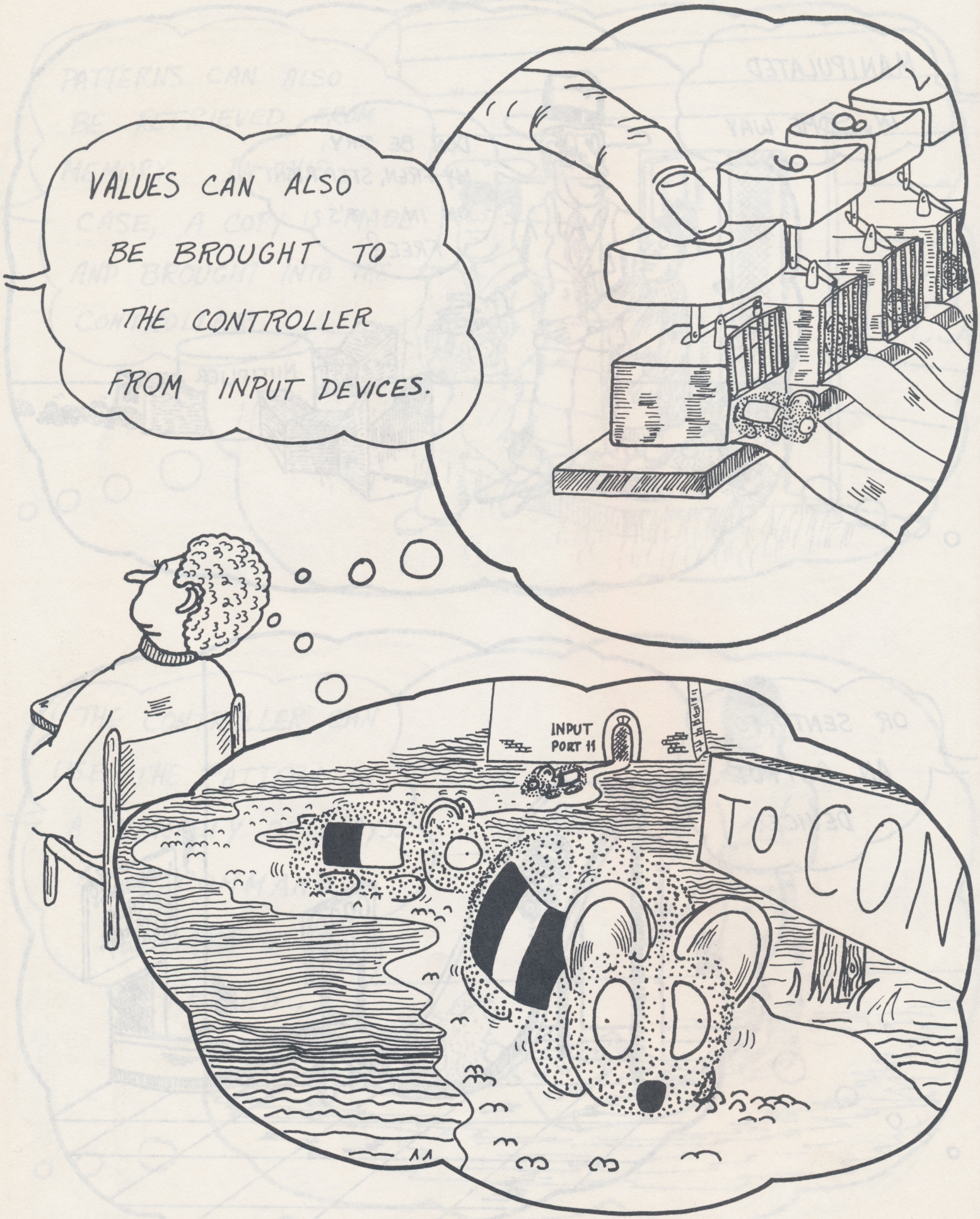
PATTERNS CAN ALSO BE RETRIEVED FROM MEMORY. IN THIS CASE, A COPY IS MADE AND BROUGHT INTO THE CONTROLLER.



THE CONTROLLER CAN USE THE PATTERN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS: AS A COMMAND, AS DATA TO BE TESTED ...

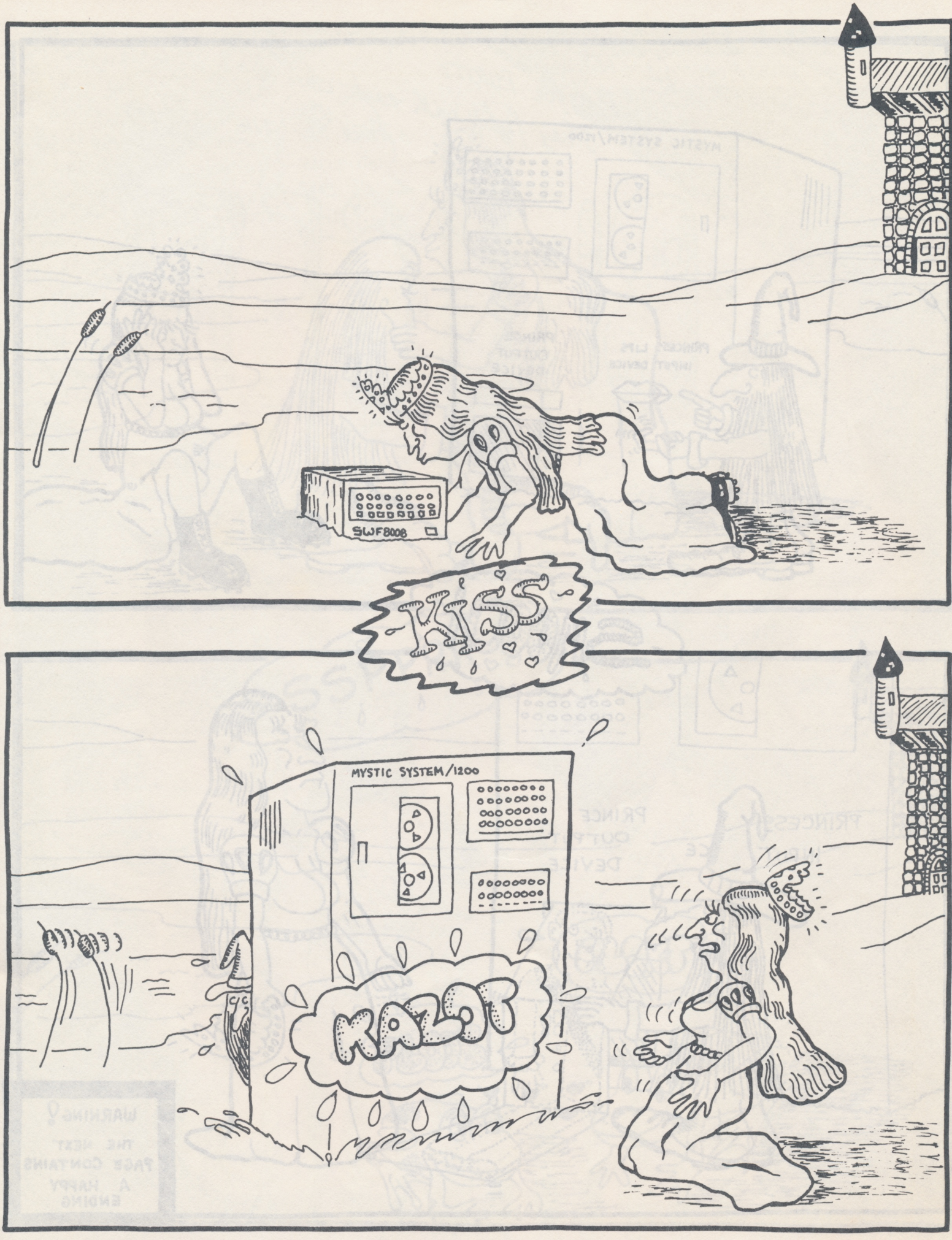

MANIPULATED IN SOME WAY
DON BE SHY, MY FREN, STEP RIGHT ON IN – IT'S FREE!
MUTIPLIER

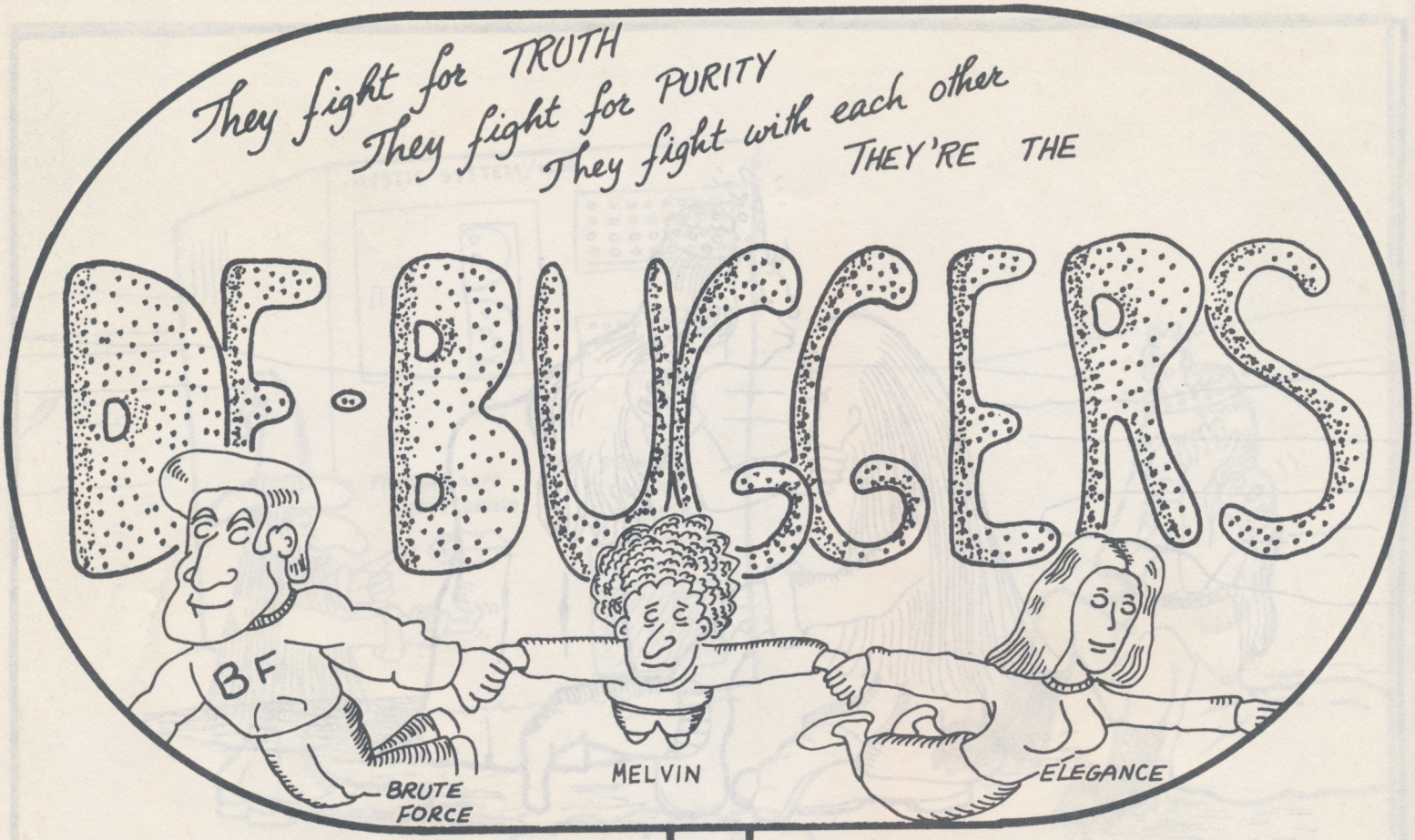

OR SENT TO AN OUTPUT DEVICE.
GOOD LUCK
WARNING! ENTERING EXTERNAL REALITY

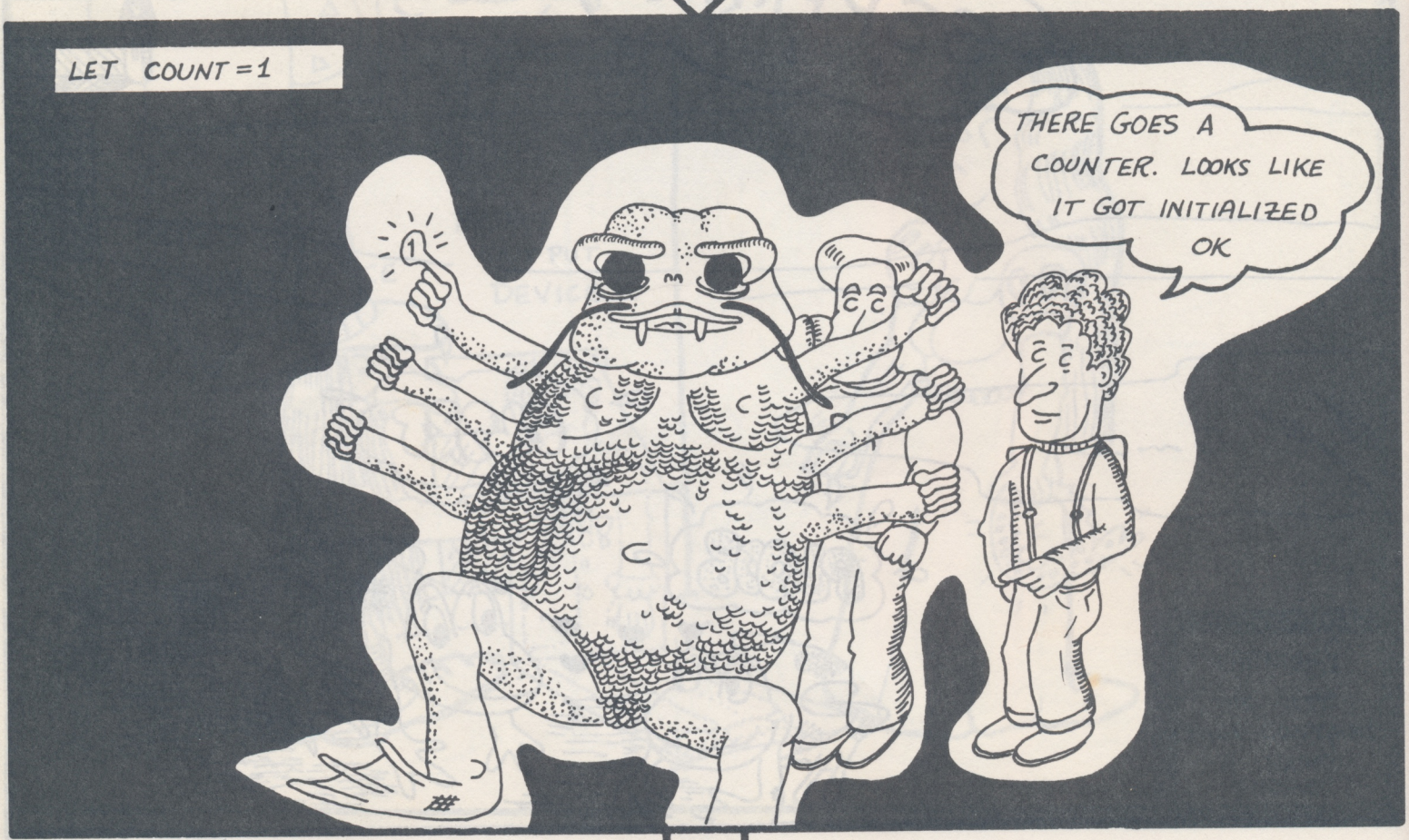

VALUES CAN ALSO BE BROUGHT TO THE CONTROLLER FROM INPUT DEVICES.
INPUT PORT 11
TO CON

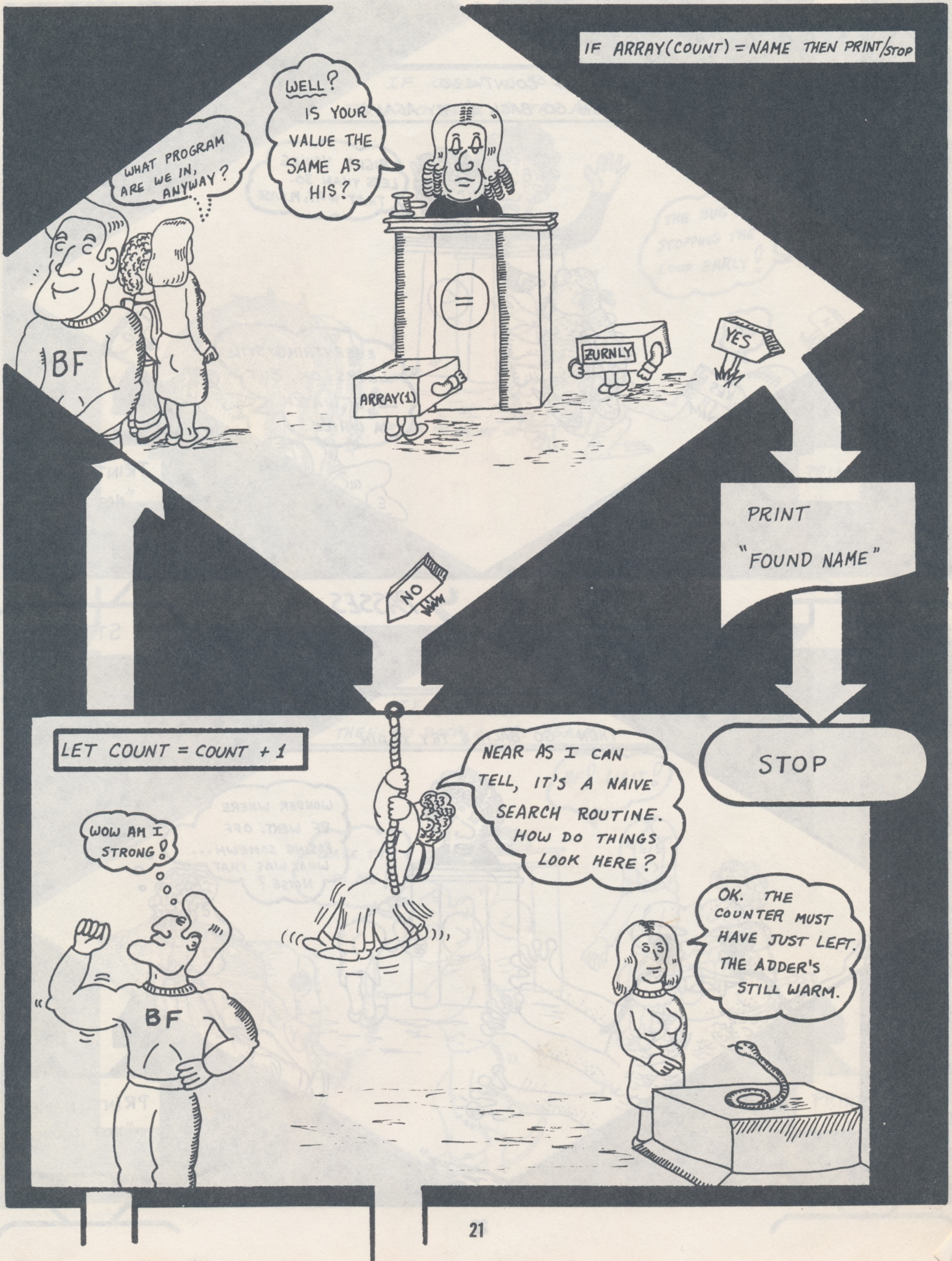
STATEMENTS IN BASIC CAN BE BEST UNDERSTOOD BY THINKING ABOUT THEIR EFFECT ON THE THREE PARTS OF THE CONCEPTUAL COMPUTER... ANY QUESTIONS ?
1ST PROGRAM- DUG WIL FER WED
HOW MANY TESTS ARE THERE GOING TO BE ?
THE END

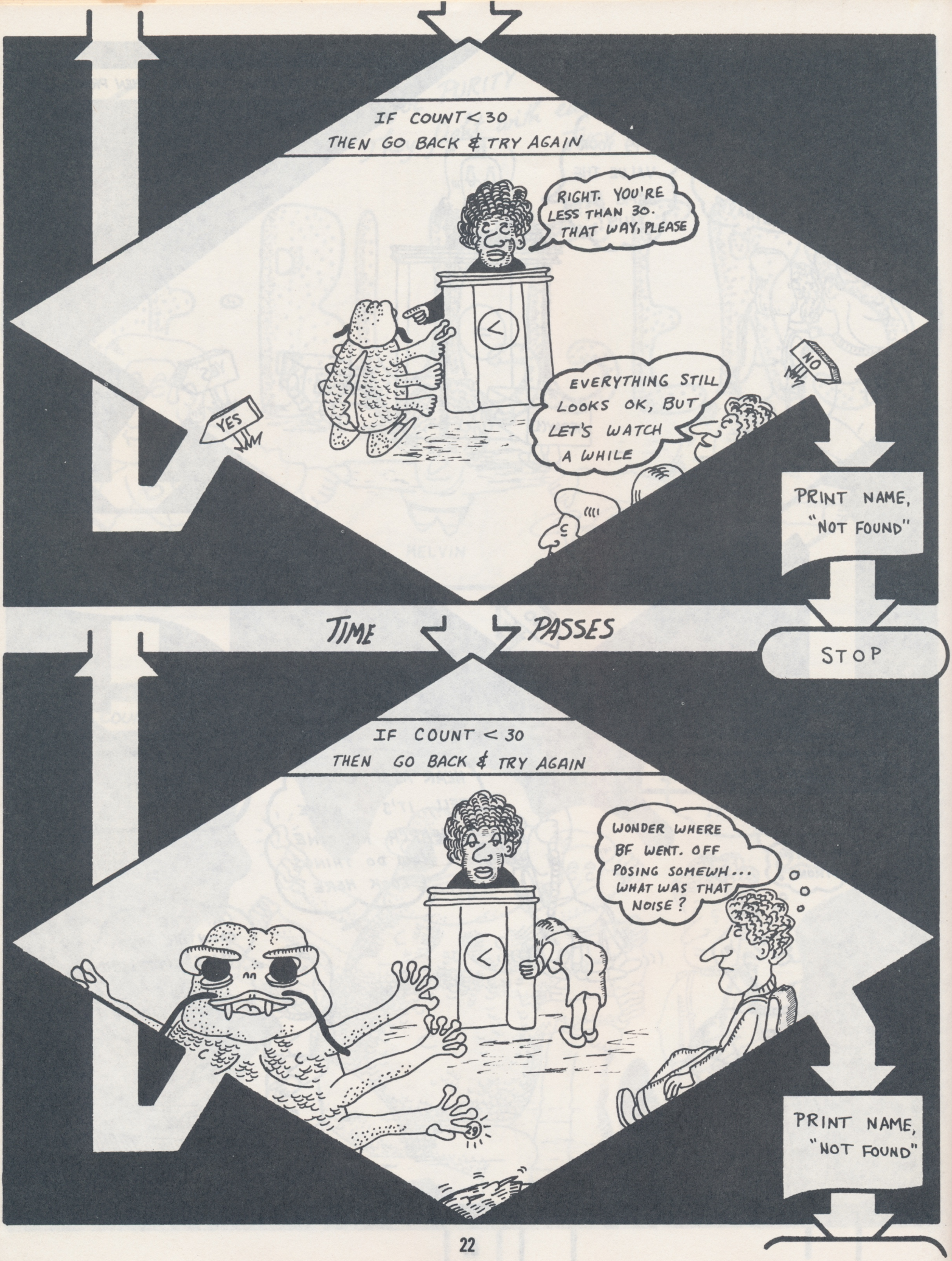
Princess Batrachas
SMACK
POOF
SWF 8008

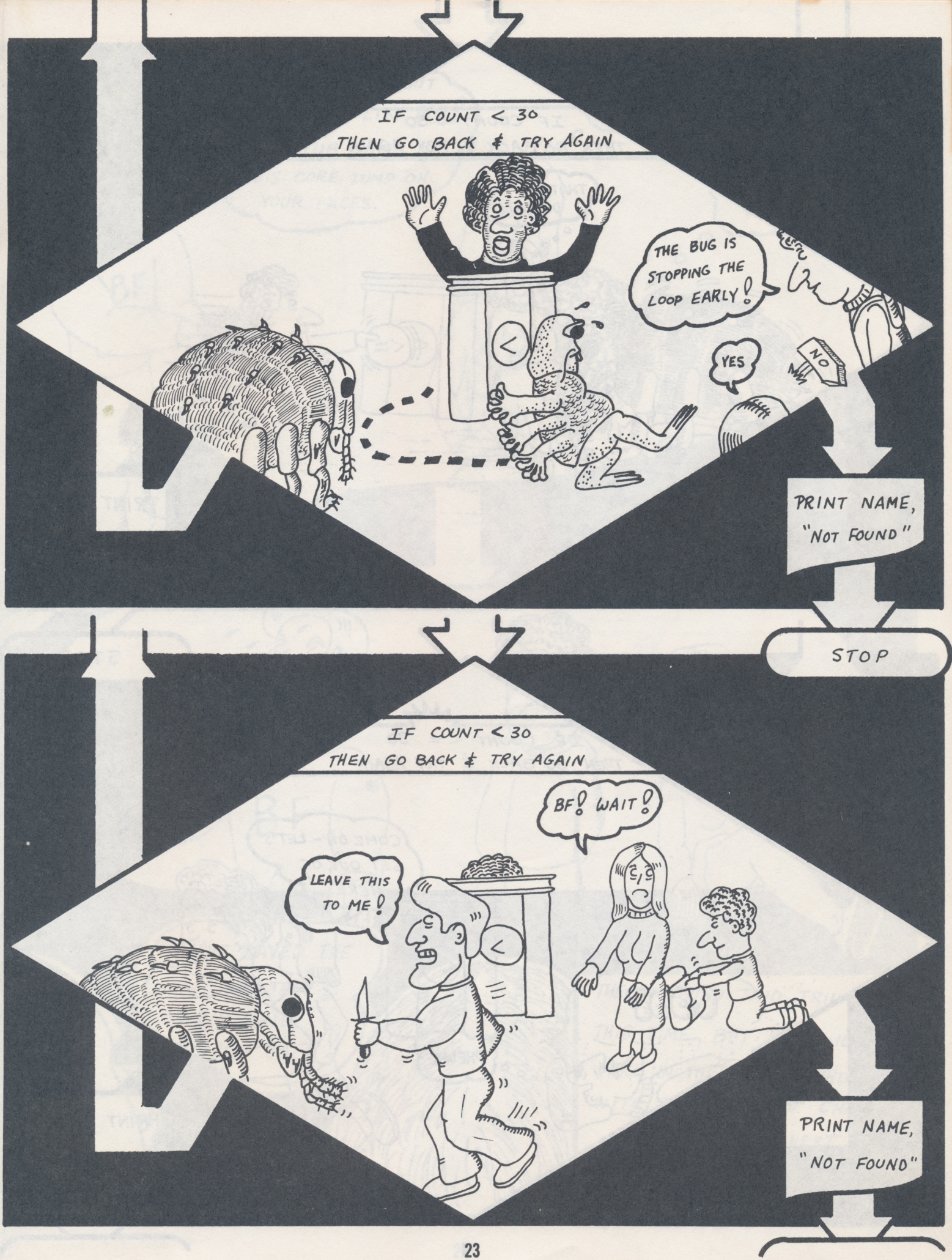

SWF8008
KISS
MYSTIC SYSTEM/1200
KAZOT

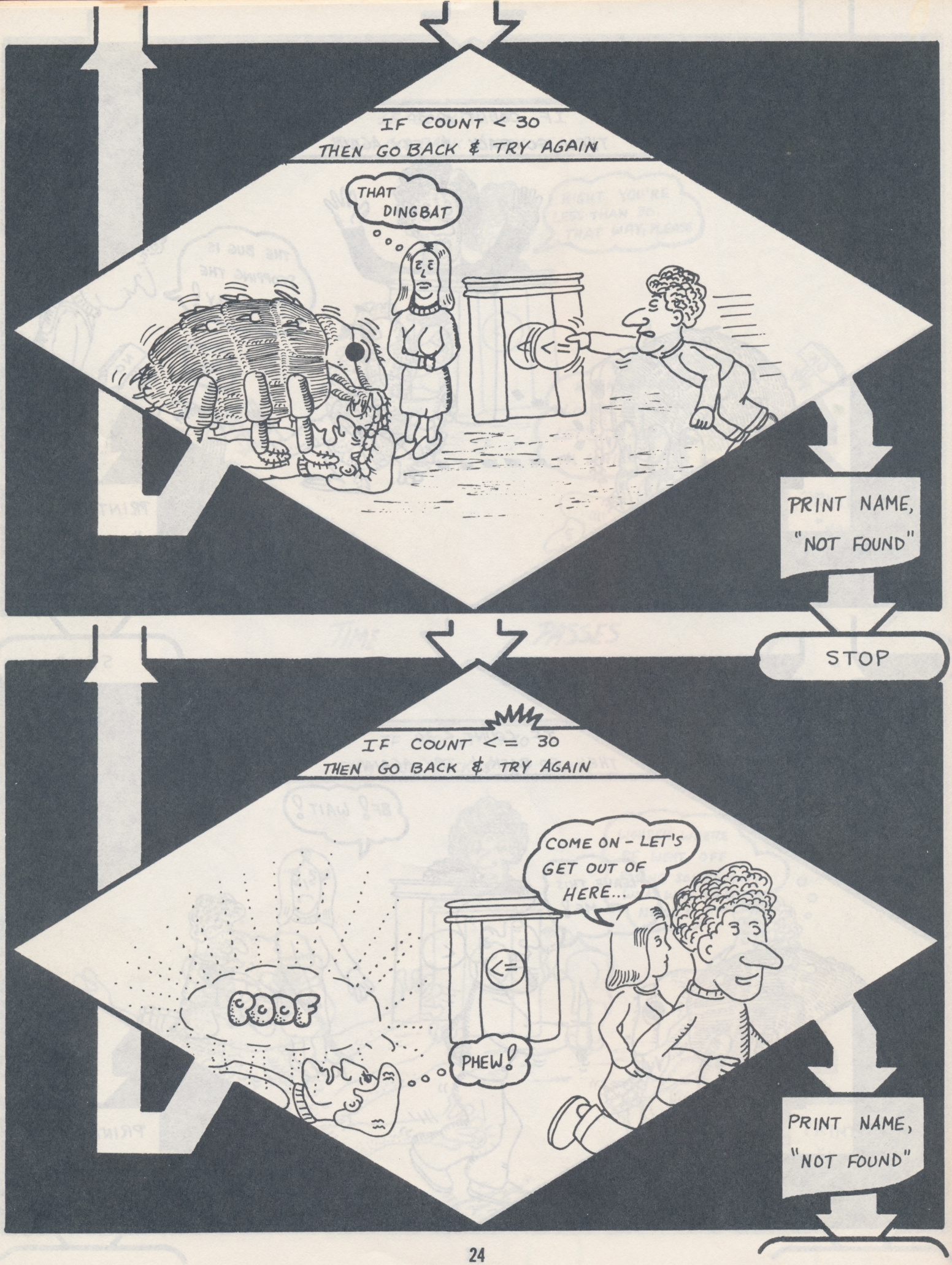

They fight for TRUTH
They fight for PURITY
They fight with each other
THEY'RE THE
D-D-BUGGERS
BF
BRUTE FORCE
MELVIN
ELEGANCE

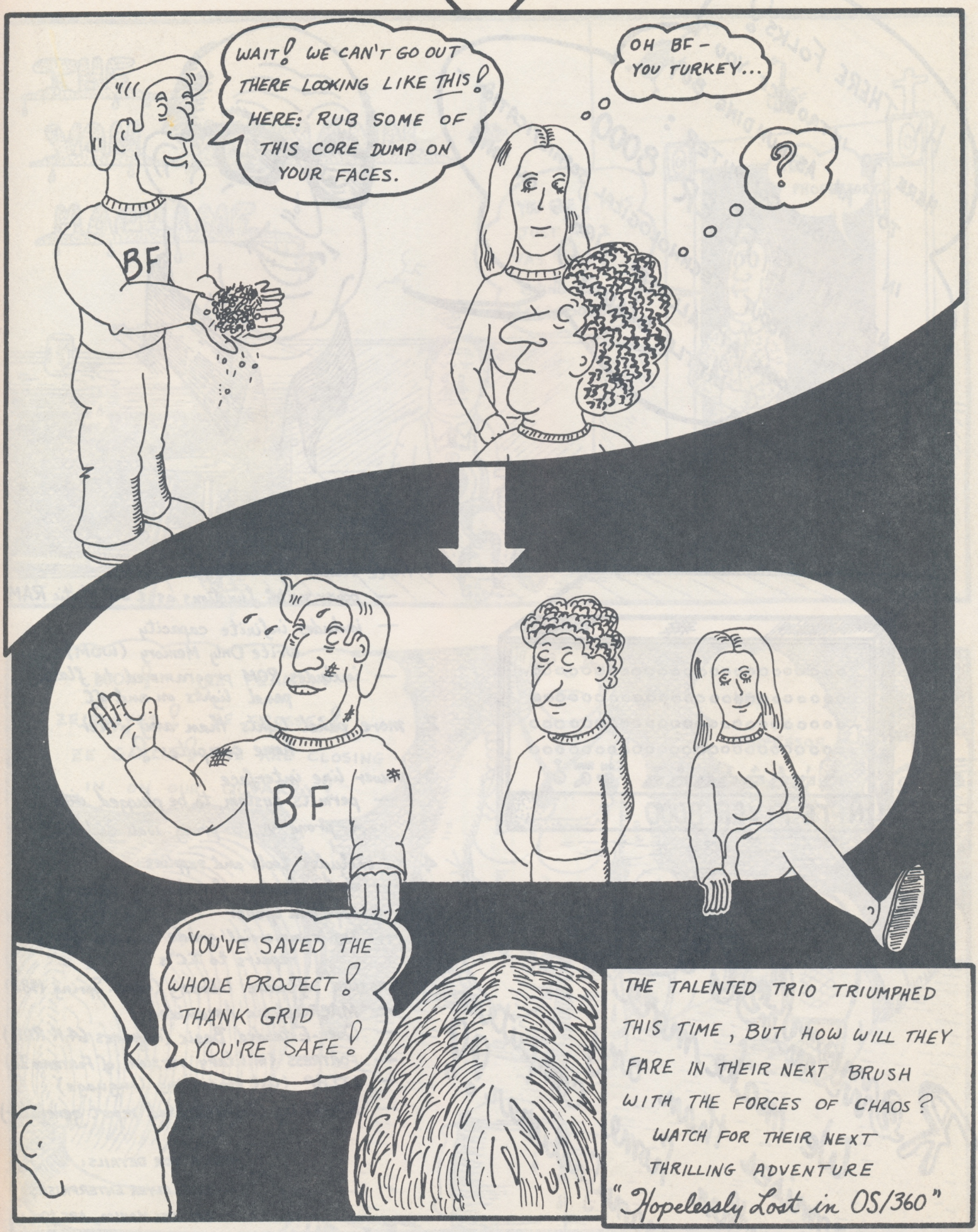

LET COUNT = 1
THERE GOES A COUNTER. LOOKS LIKE IT GOT INITIALIZED OK

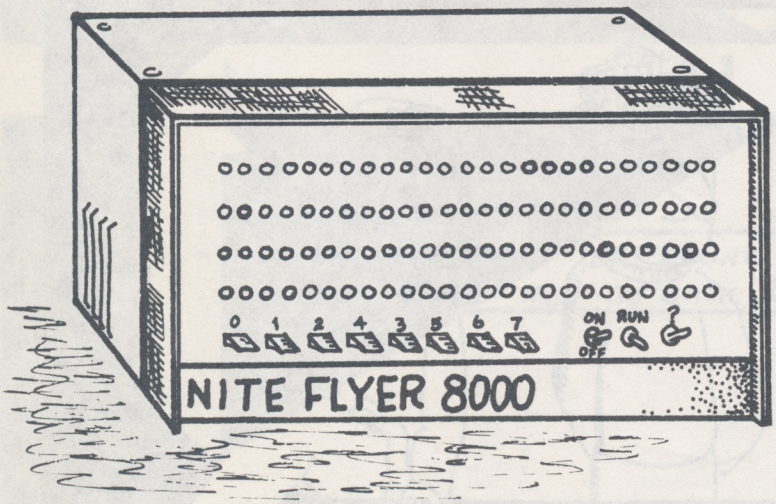

IF ARRAY(COUNT) = NAME THEN PRINT/STOP
WELL? IS YOUR VALUE THE SAME AS HIS?
WHAT PROGRAM ARE WE IN, ANYWAY?
BF
ARRAY(1)
=
ZURNLY
YES
NO
PRINT "FOUND NAME"
STOP
LET COUNT = COUNT + 1
NEAR AS I CAN TELL, IT'S A NAIVE SEARCH ROUTINE. HOW DO THINGS LOOK HERE?
WOW AM I STRONG!
BF
OK. THE COUNTER MUST HAVE JUST LEFT. THE ADDER'S STILL WARM.


IF COUNT < 30
THEN GO BACK & TRY AGAIN
RIGHT. YOU'RE LESS THAN 30. THAT WAY, PLEASE
EVERYTHING STILL LOOKS OK, BUT LET'S WATCH A WHILE
YES
NO
PRINT NAME, "NOT FOUND"
TIME PASSES
STOP
IF COUNT < 30
THEN GO BACK & TRY AGAIN
WONDER WHERE BF WENT. OFF POSING SOMEWH... WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?
PRINT NAME, "NOT FOUND"


IF COUNT < 30
THEN GO BACK & TRY AGAIN
THE BUG IS STOPPING THE LOOP EARLY!
YES
NO
PRINT NAME, "NOT FOUND"
STOP
IF COUNT < 30
THEN GO BACK & TRY AGAIN
BF! WAIT!
LEAVE THIS TO ME!
PRINT NAME, "NOT FOUND"


IF COUNT < 30
THEN GO BACK & TRY AGAIN
THAT DINGBAT
<=
PRINT NAME, "NOT FOUND"
STOP
IF COUNT <= 30
THEN GO BACK & TRY AGAIN
COME ON - LET'S GET OUT OF HERE...
POOF
PHEW!
<=
PRINT NAME, "NOT FOUND"


WAIT! WE CAN'T GO OUT THERE LOOKING LIKE THIS! HERE: RUB SOME OF THIS CORE DUMP ON YOUR FACES.
BF
OH BF - YOU TURKEY...
?
BF
YOU'VE SAVED THE WHOLE PROJECT! THANK GRID YOU'RE SAFE!
THE TALENTED TRIO TRIUMPHED THIS TIME, BUT HOW WILL THEY FARE IN THEIR NEXT BRUSH WITH THE FORCES OF CHAOS? WATCH FOR THEIR NEXT THRILLING ADVENTURE "Hopelessly Lost in OS/360"



features

1 three kinds of memory!
- power switch functions as 1 bit static RAM
- includes infinite capacity Write Only Memory (WOM)
- includes ROM programmed to flash panel lights on and off

2 more panel lights than any other home computer!

3 power line interface
- permits system to be plugged into 2-prong or 3-prong wall sockets!

4 kit includes tools and supplies
- sledge hammer for shaping chassis
- beer can opener
- 3oz. commercial grade silicon for repairs to IC's

5 massive software library (avail. Spring 1983)
- MACRObiotic Assembler
- Over-Extended Basic (requires 64K RAM)
- FORTRESS (military version of FORTRAN II)
- LITHP (list processing language)
- RPG Whizz (sophisticated report generator)

Remember: We make more promises than any other home computer manufacturer!!

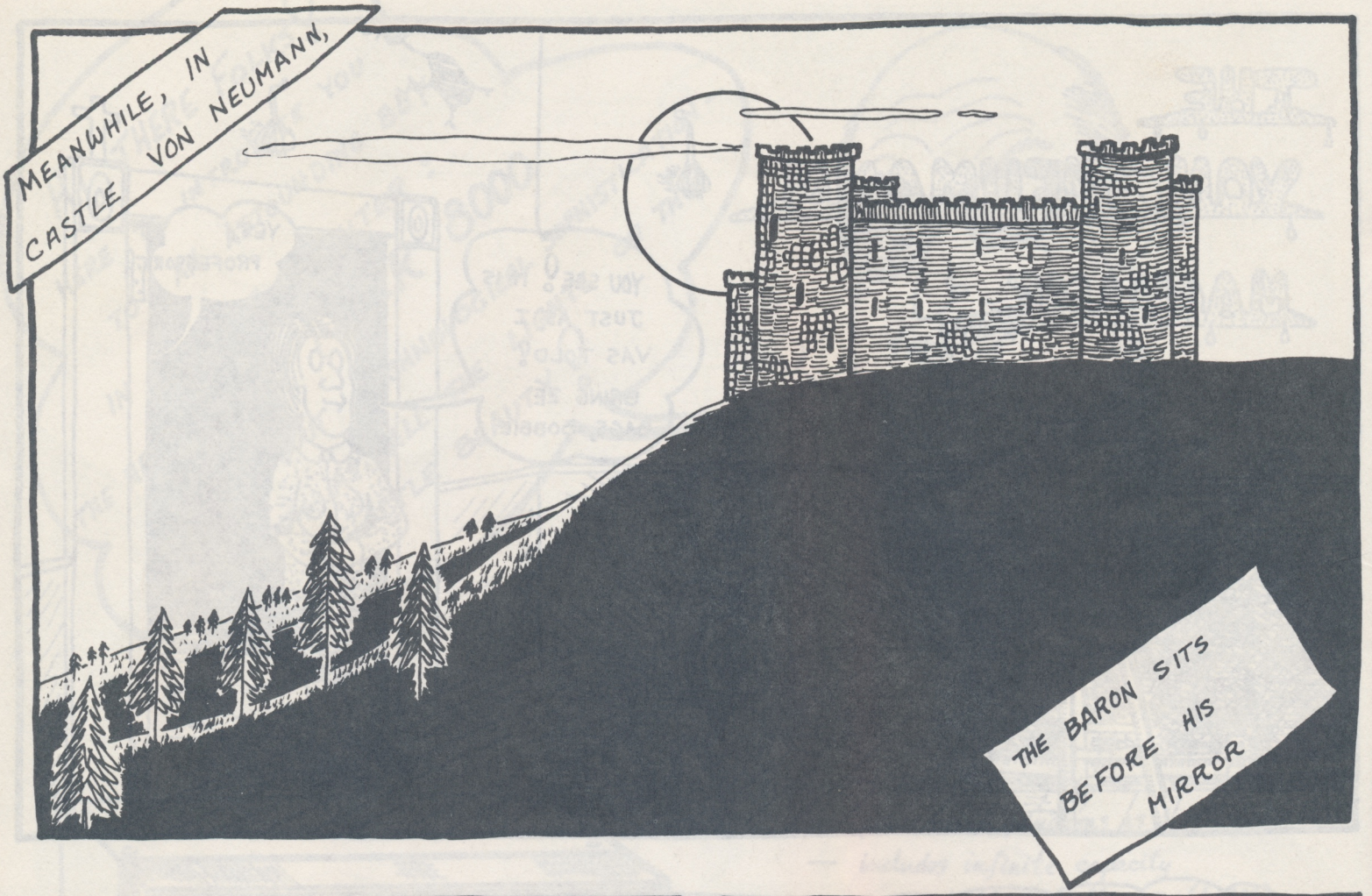
WRITE FOR DETAILS:

NITE FLYER ENTERPRISES

127 DEL MONICO, APT. 10

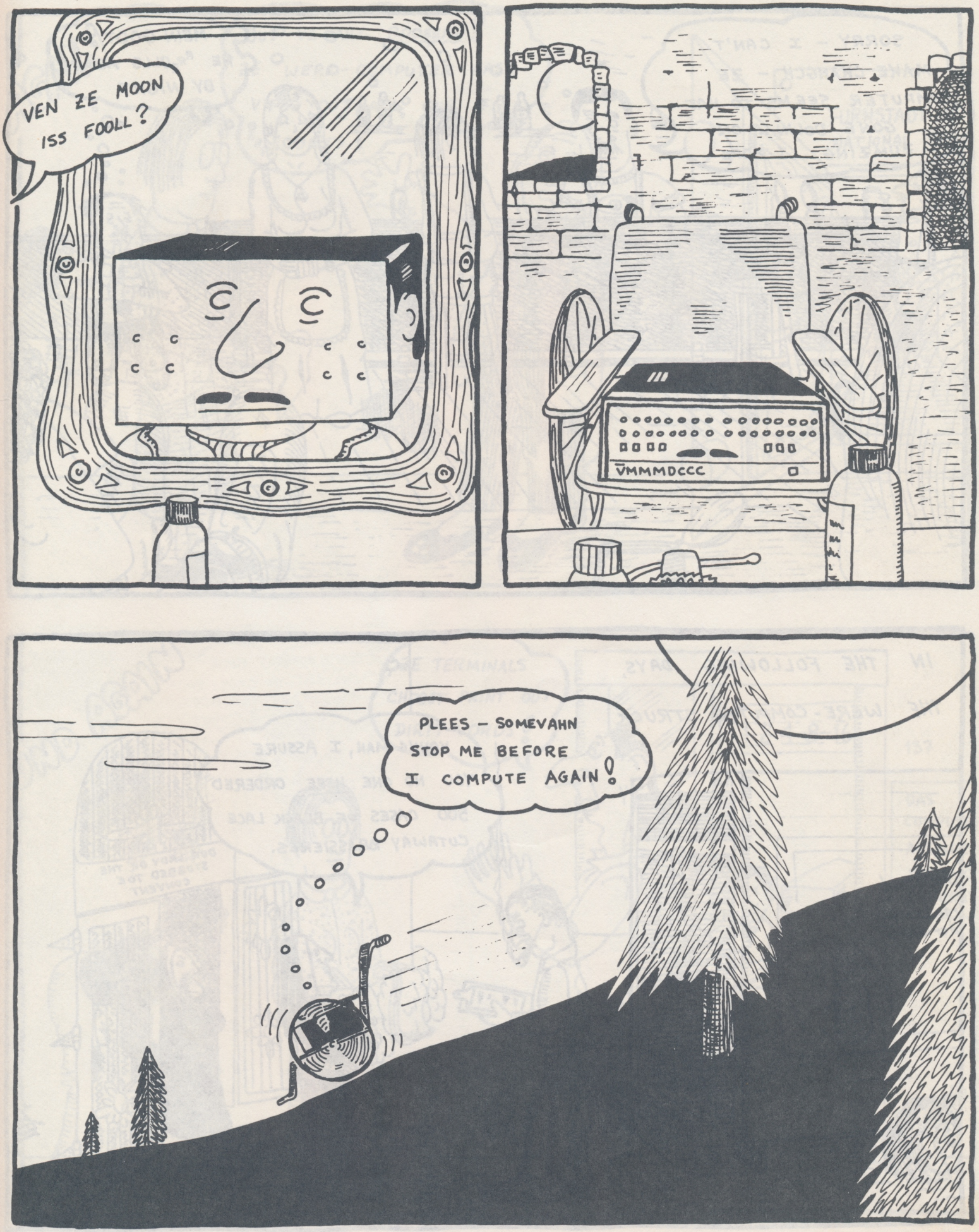
EL CERVEZA, CA

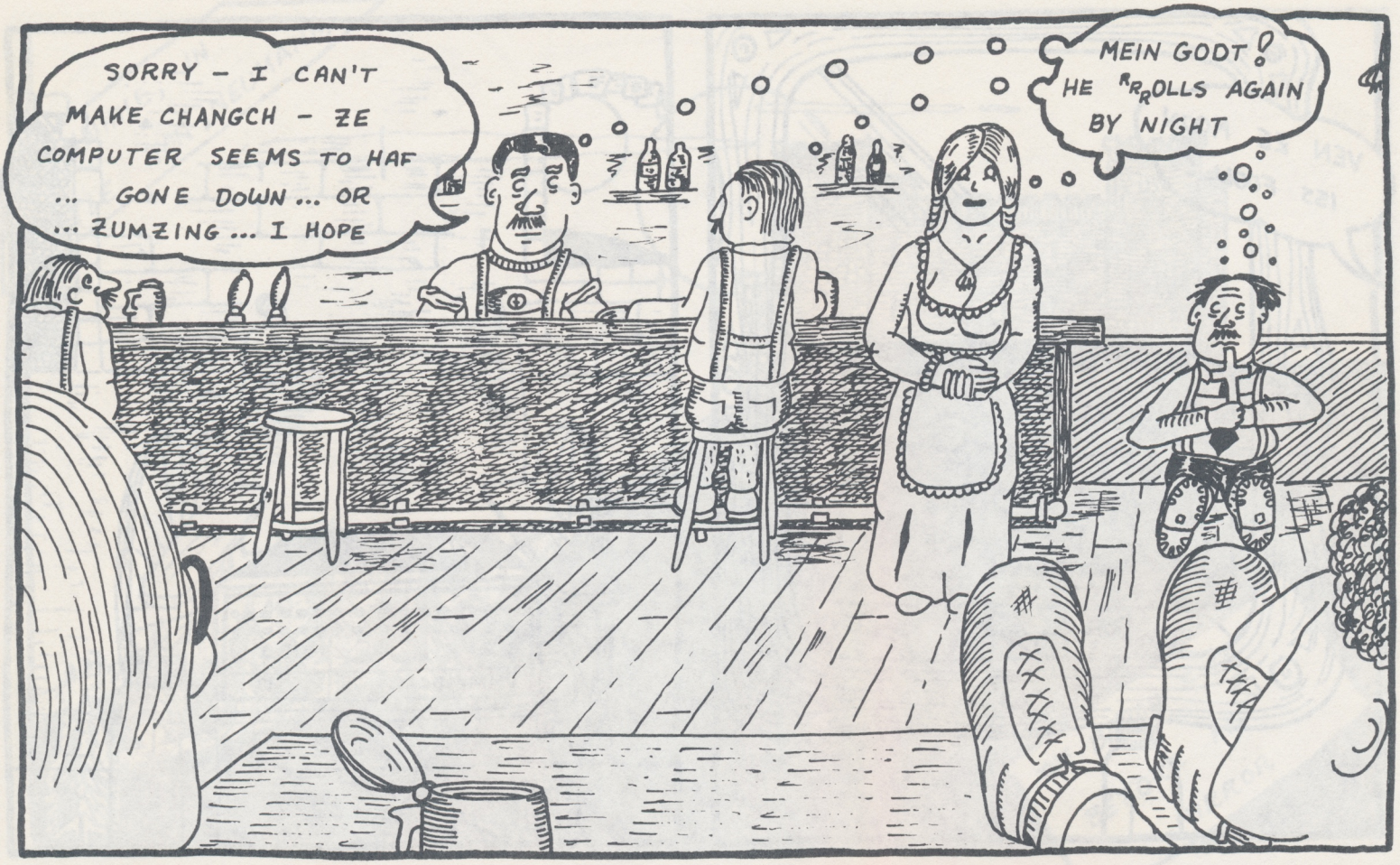
THE VON NEUMANN MACHINE
YOU SEE! IT IS JUST AS I VAS TOLD! BRING ZE BAGS, BOBBIE.
YES, PROFESSOR
LOOK! ZE FEAR IN ZEIR EYES! ZE CROSSES! ZE GARLIC! VE ARE CLOSING IN ON OUR QUVARRY!
YES, PROFESSOR

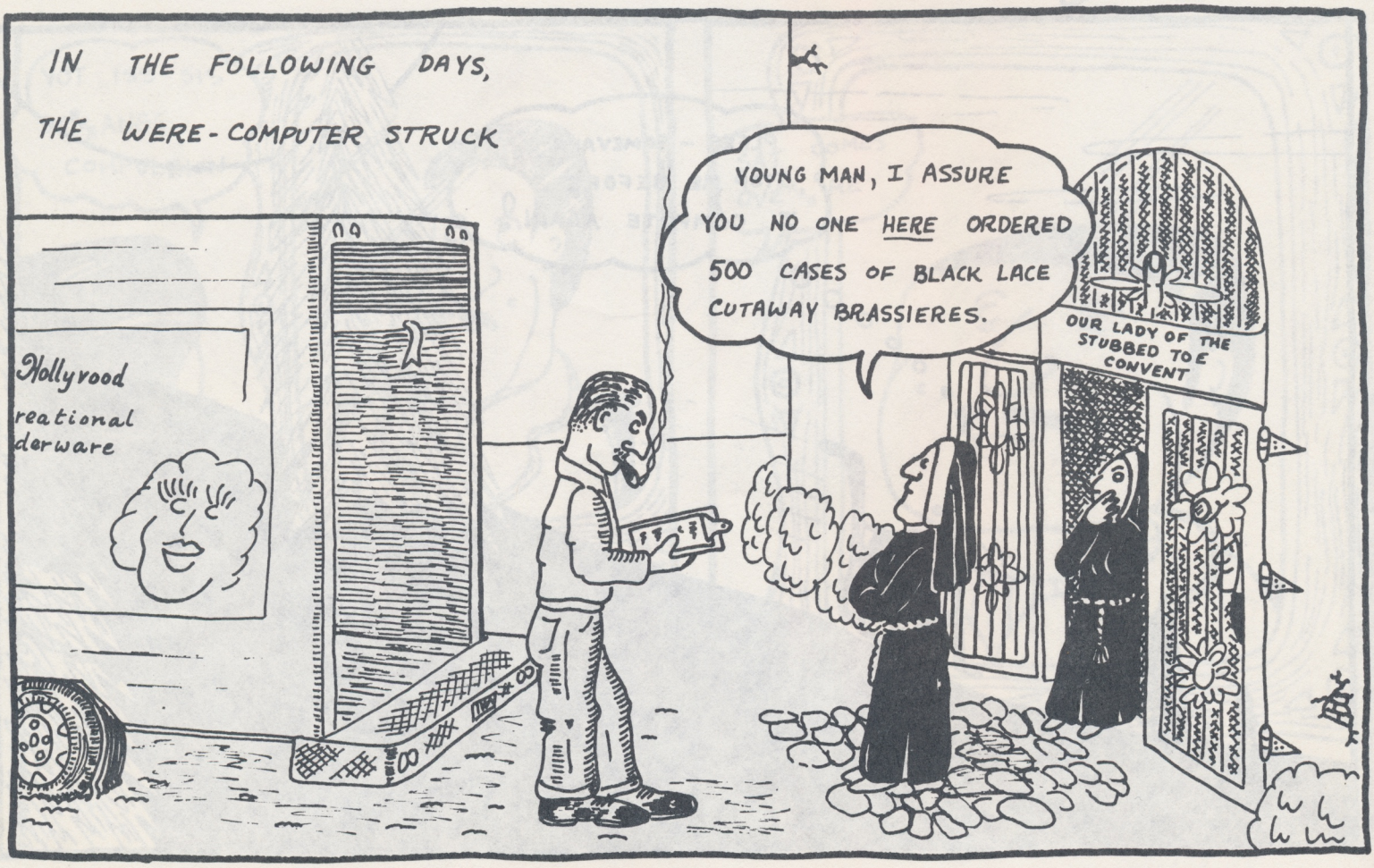

MEANWHILE, IN CASTLE VON NEUMANN,
THE BARON SITS BEFORE HIS MIRROR

VOT ISS SIS STRRRANGE COMPULZION

SAT COMES OVERRR ME


VEN ZE MOON ISS FOOLL?
VMMMDCCC
PLEES – SOMEVAHN STOP ME BEFORE I COMPUTE AGAIN!


SORRY - I CAN'T MAKE CHANGCH - ZE COMPUTER SEEMS TO HAF ... GONE DOWN ... OR ... ZUMZING ... I HOPE
MEIN GODT! HE RRROLLS AGAIN BY NIGHT


IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS,
THE WERE-COMPUTER STRUCK
YOUNG MAN, I ASSURE YOU NO ONE HERE ORDERED 500 CASES OF BLACK LACE CUTAWAY BRASSIERES.
OUR LADY OF THE STUBBED TOE CONVENT
Hollyrood
reational
derware

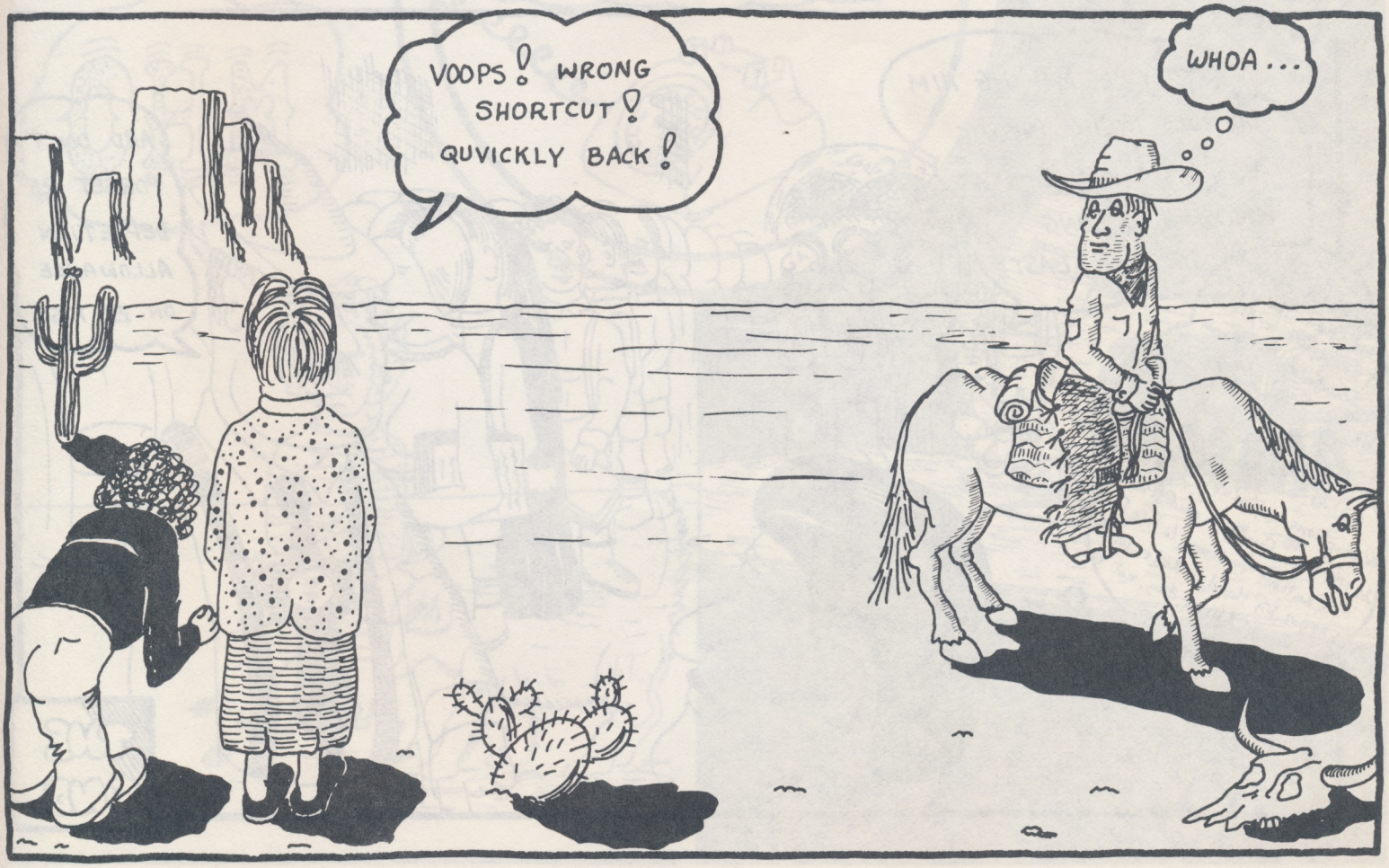
AGAIN
BUT VE ARE ROOEEND!
ZE WERE-COMPUTER HASS VIPED OUT ALL OUR RRRECORTS!
FURNSTADT 1ST NATIONAL BANK

OND AGAIN
ZE TERMINALS CHOOST PRINT OUT DIRTY VORDS!
FZ-4-8-16
137
DAS COMPUTE
ASSISTE
INSTRUC
LABORA

VE MUST DO YOT TRADITION TELLS US! VE CAN LIF IN TERROR NO LONGER!
GARLIC
COMPUTER REPAIRS
I CAN'T HOLD YOU MUCH LONGER, PROFESSOR...

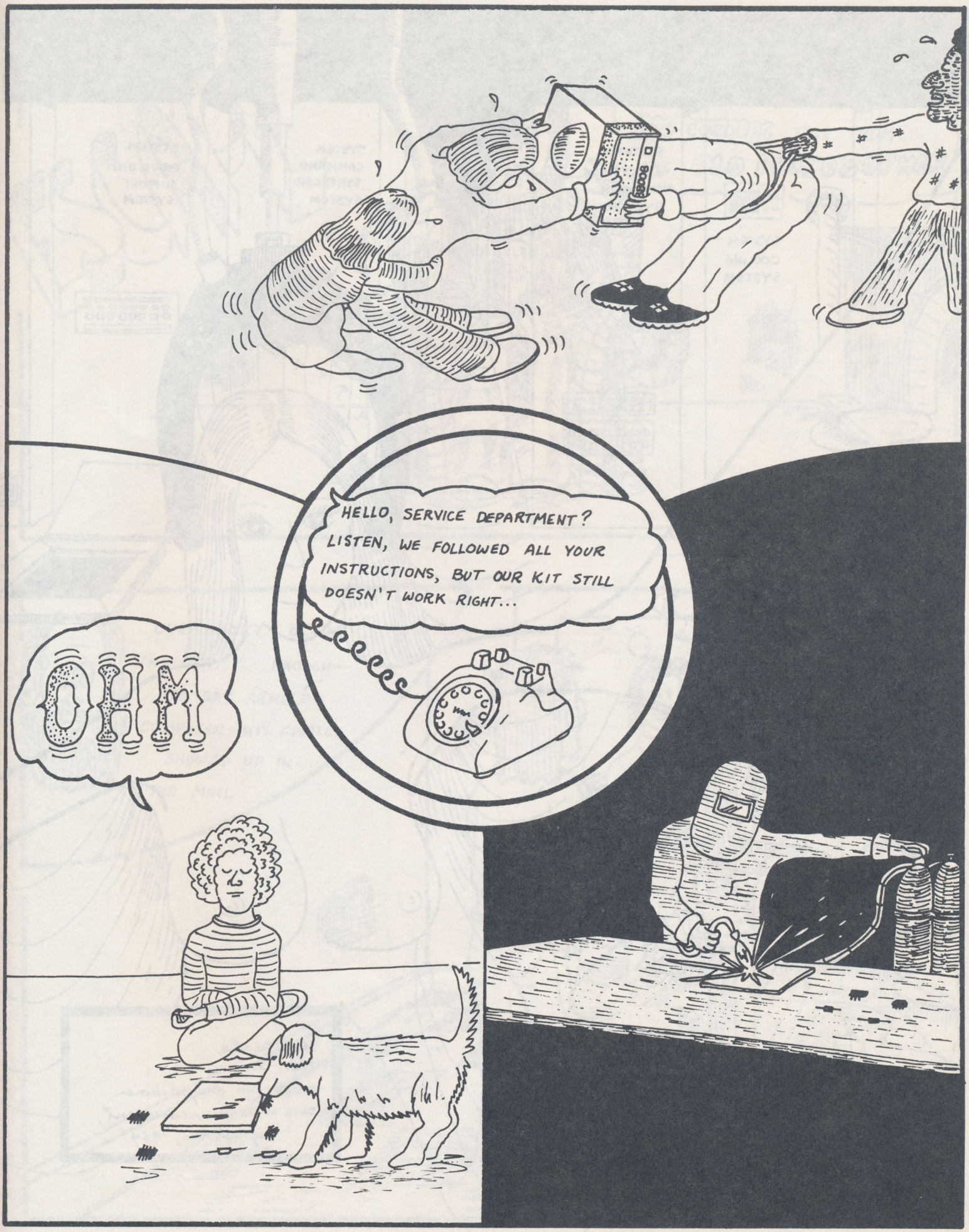
VOT A LOSS TO SCIENCE IF SEY HARM HIM!
DON'T FORGET YOUR FLASHLIGHT—IN CASE YOUR TORCH GOES OUT
I CAN'T GET MEIN LIT
HERE—TRY MY LIGHTER

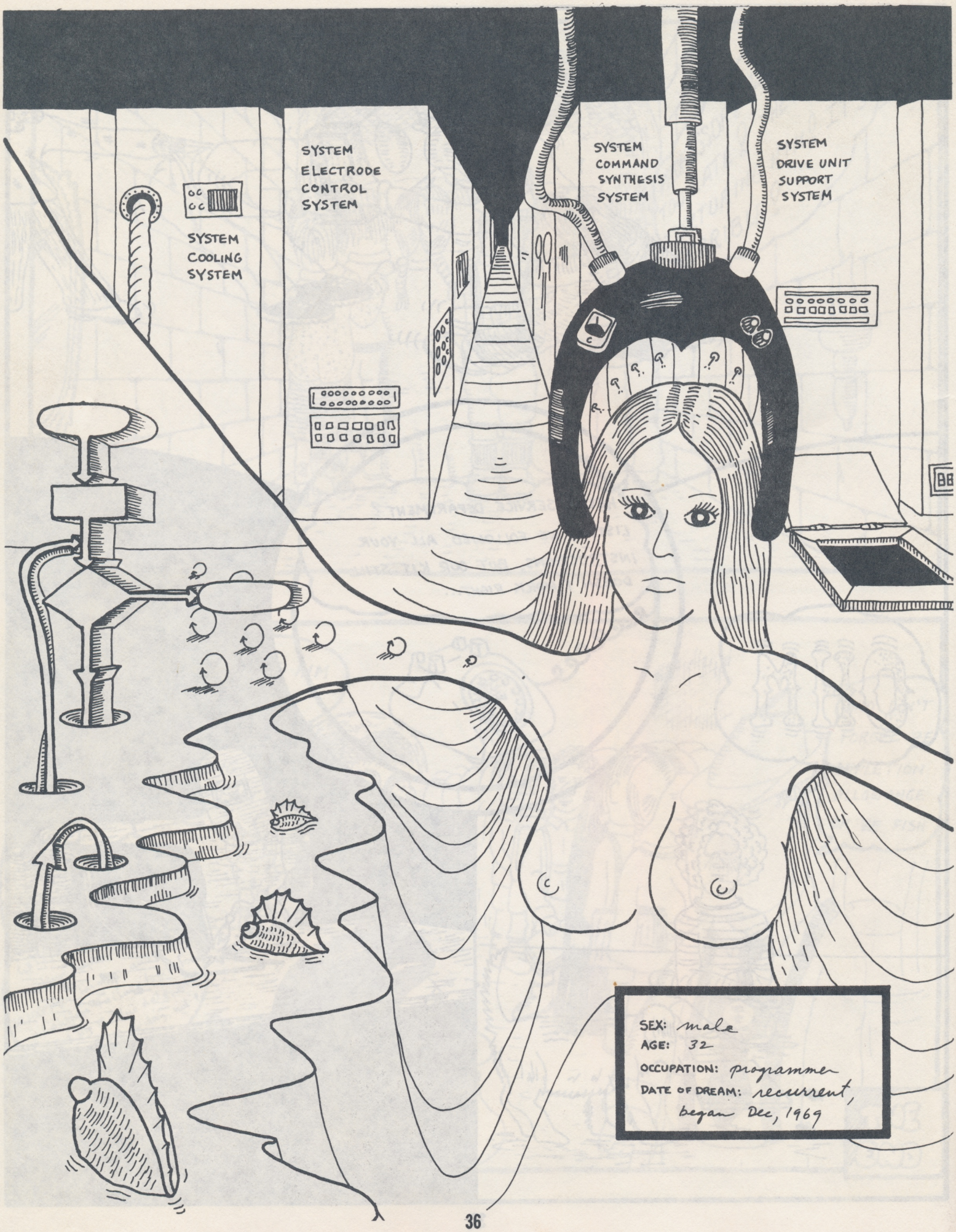
VE MUST GET TO HIM FIRST! COME, BOBBY, I KNOW EIN SHORTCUT
MOB MONITOR

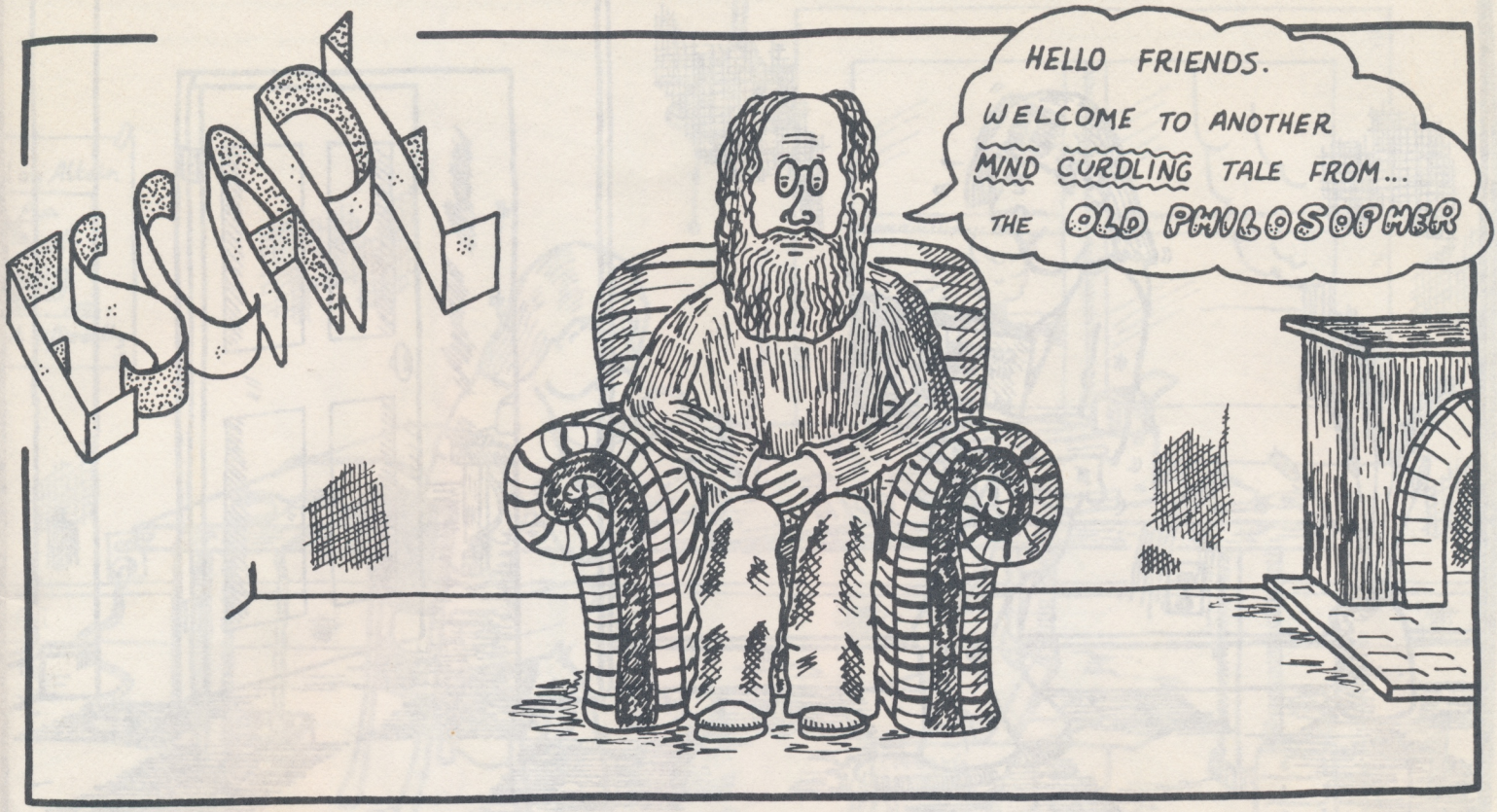

VOOPS! WRONG SHORTCUT! QUVICKLY BACK!
WHOA...

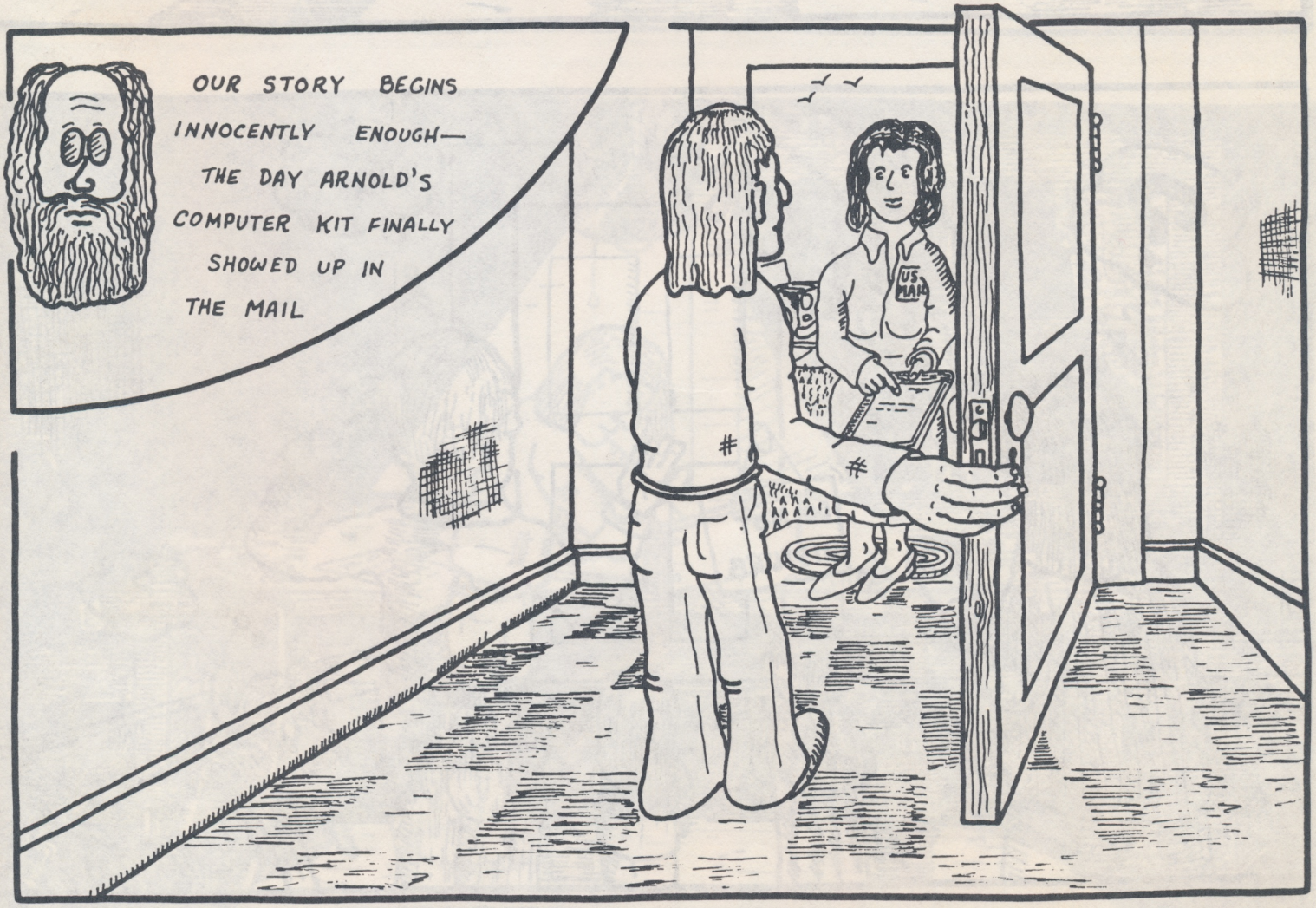
PROFESSOR! WE'RE TOO LATE! THEY'RE TORTURING HIM! IT'S TERRIBLE!

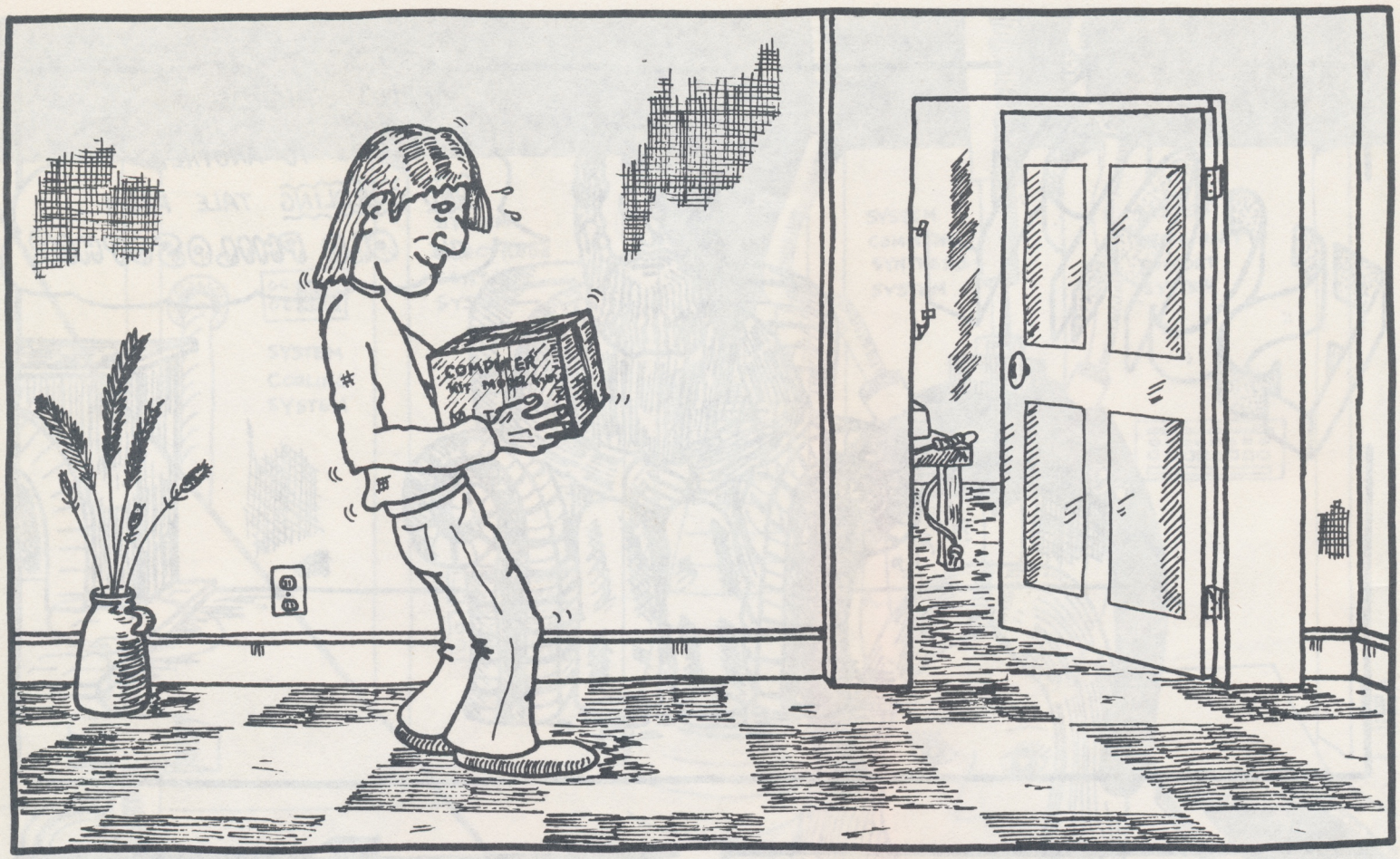
THEY'RE MAKING HIM DO ALL THEIR INCOME TAX FORMS! I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG HE CAN LAST!
AAARGH!
AND DON'T FORGET ZE DEPLETION ALLOWANCE ON ZE FISH
THE END


HELLO, SERVICE DEPARTMENT?
LISTEN, WE FOLLOWED ALL YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, BUT OUR KIT STILL DOESN'T WORK RIGHT...
OHM

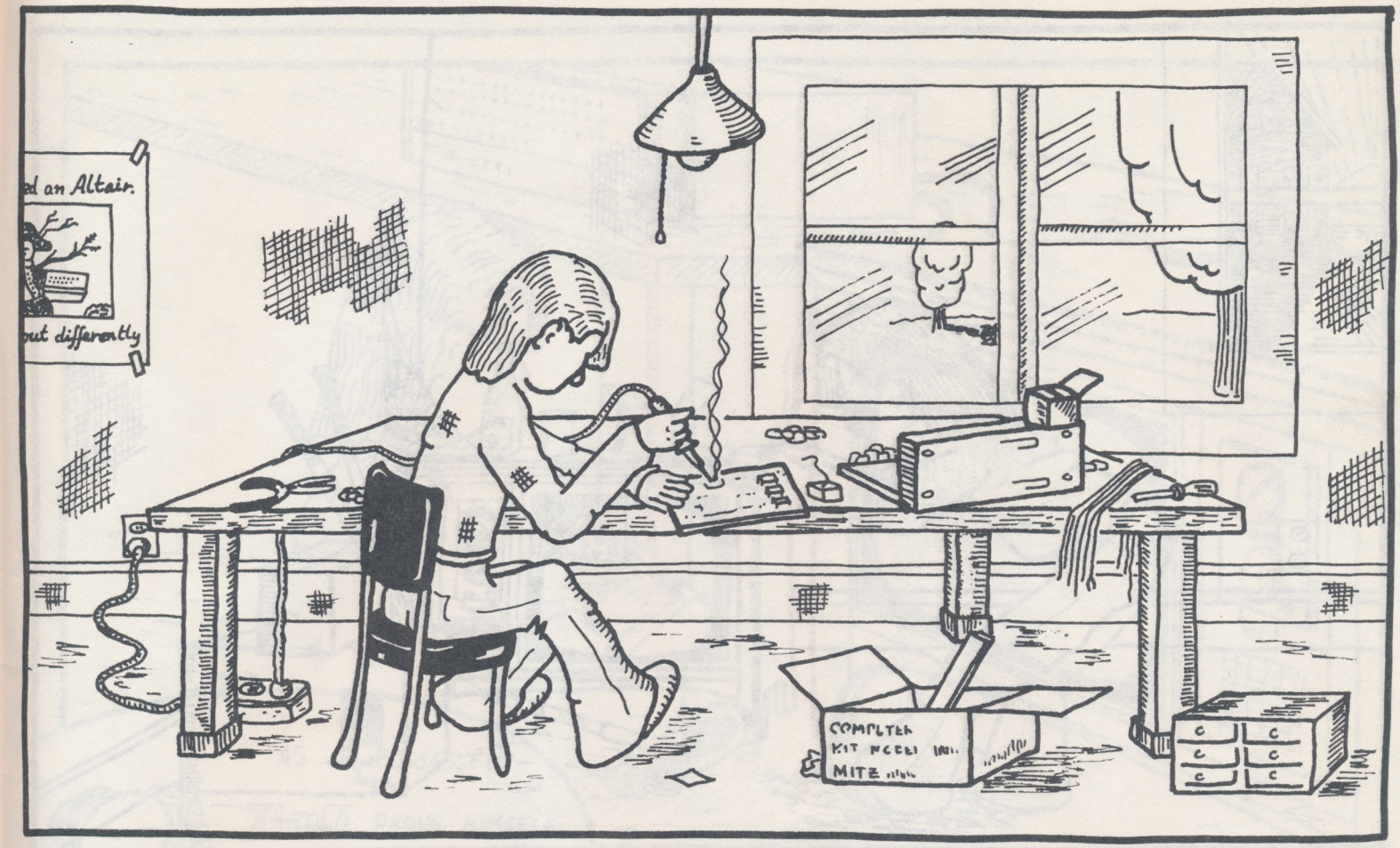

SYSTEM
ELECTRODE
CONTROL
SYSTEM
SYSTEM
COMMAND
SYNTHESIS
SYSTEM
SYSTEM
DRIVE UNIT
SUPPORT
SYSTEM
SYSTEM
COOLING
SYSTEM
SEX: male
AGE: 32
OCCUPATION: programmer
DATE OF DREAM: recurrent,
began Dec, 1969

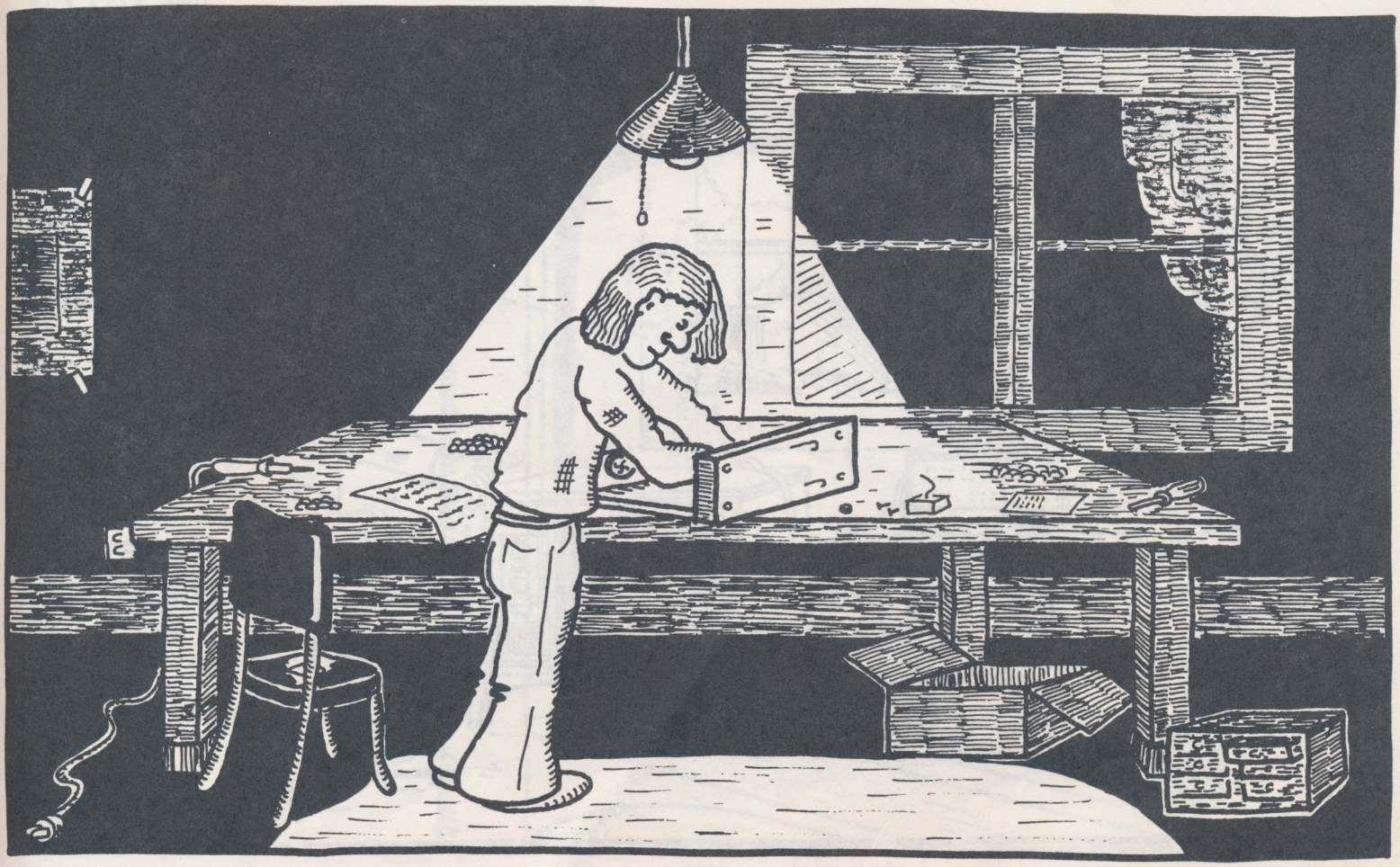

ESCAPE
HELLO FRIENDS.
WELCOME TO ANOTHER MIND CURDLING TALE FROM...
THE OLD PHILOSOPHER

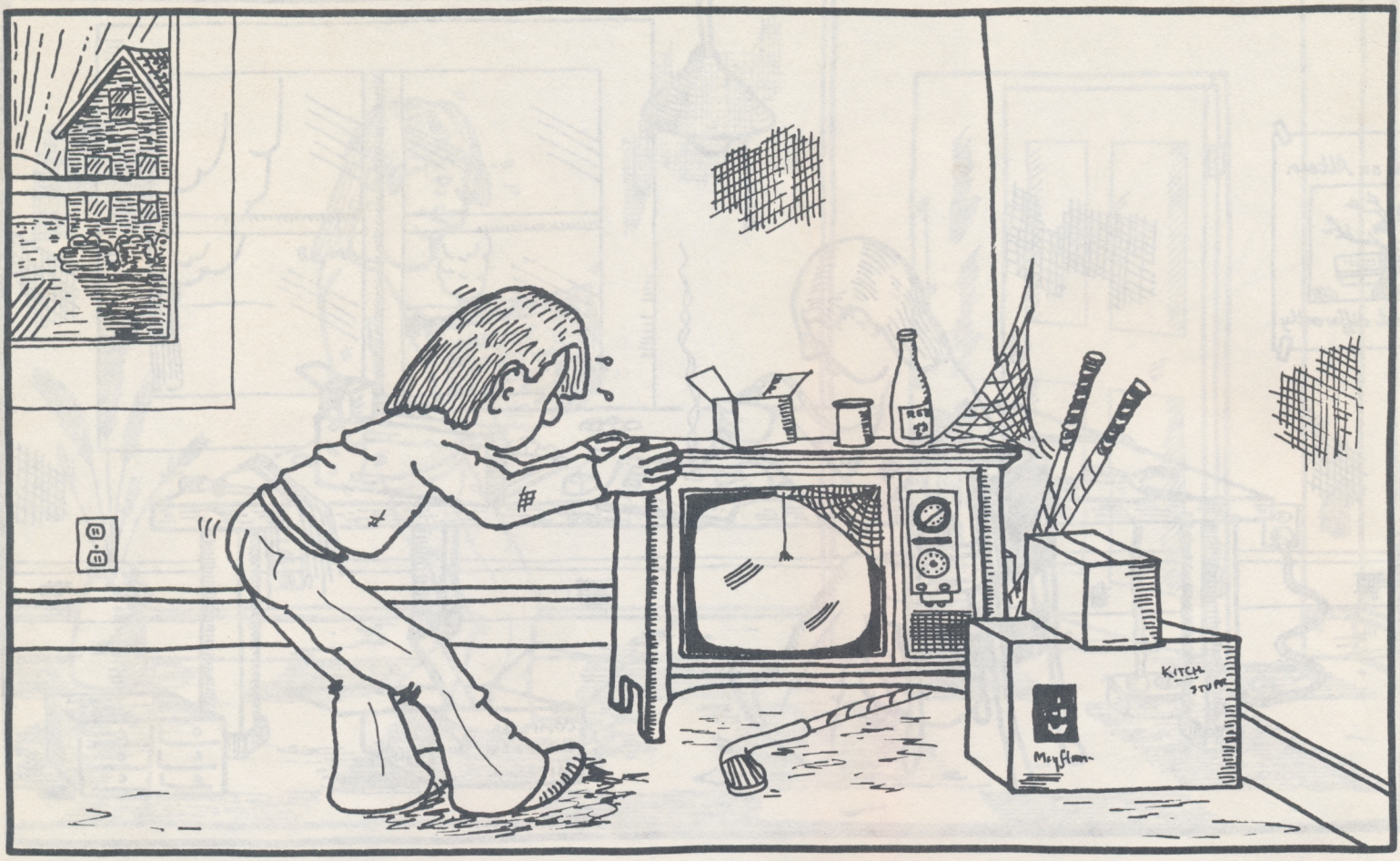

OUR STORY BEGINS INNOCENTLY ENOUGH— THE DAY ARNOLD'S COMPUTER KIT FINALLY SHOWED UP IN THE MAIL
US MAIL

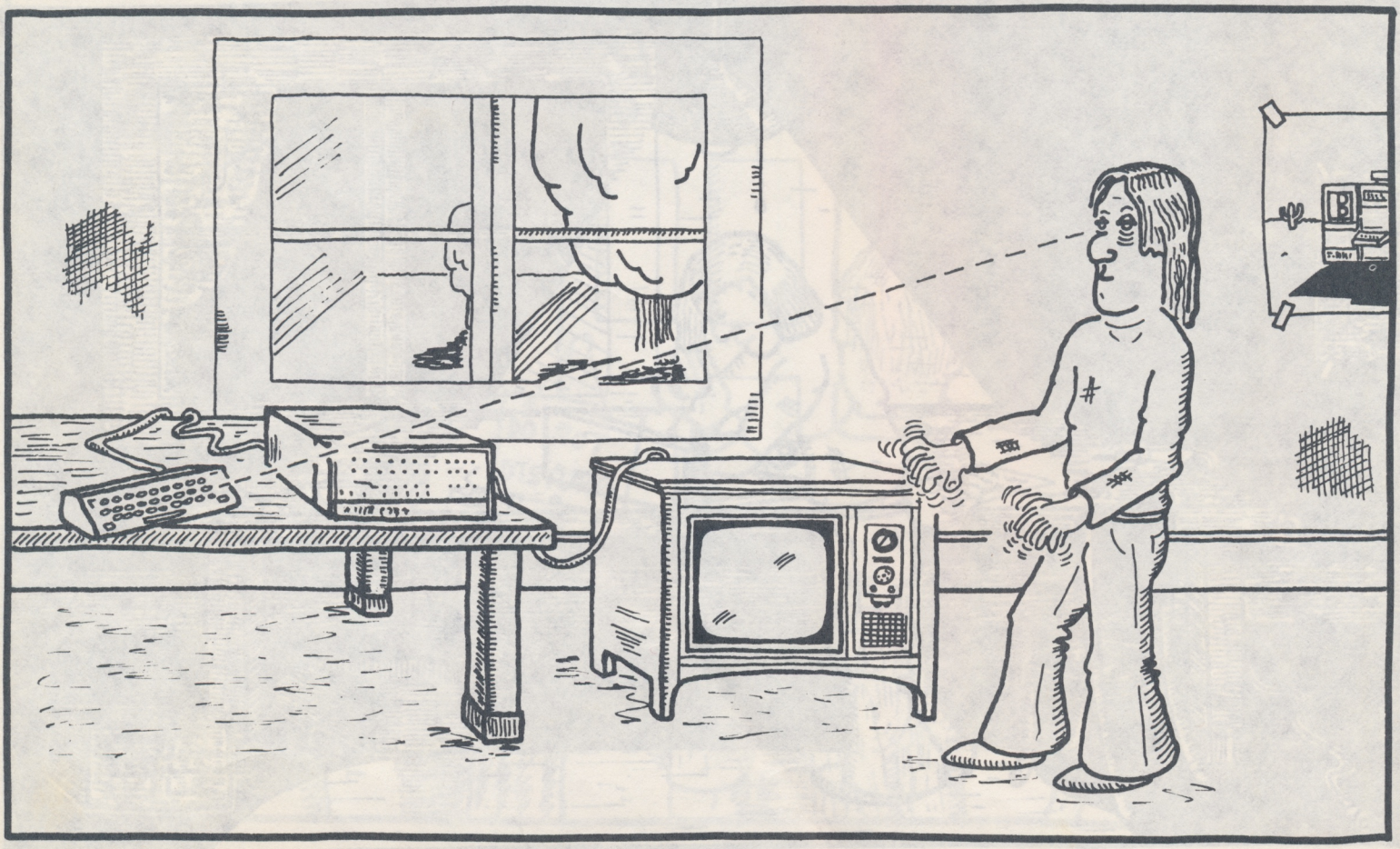

COMPUTER

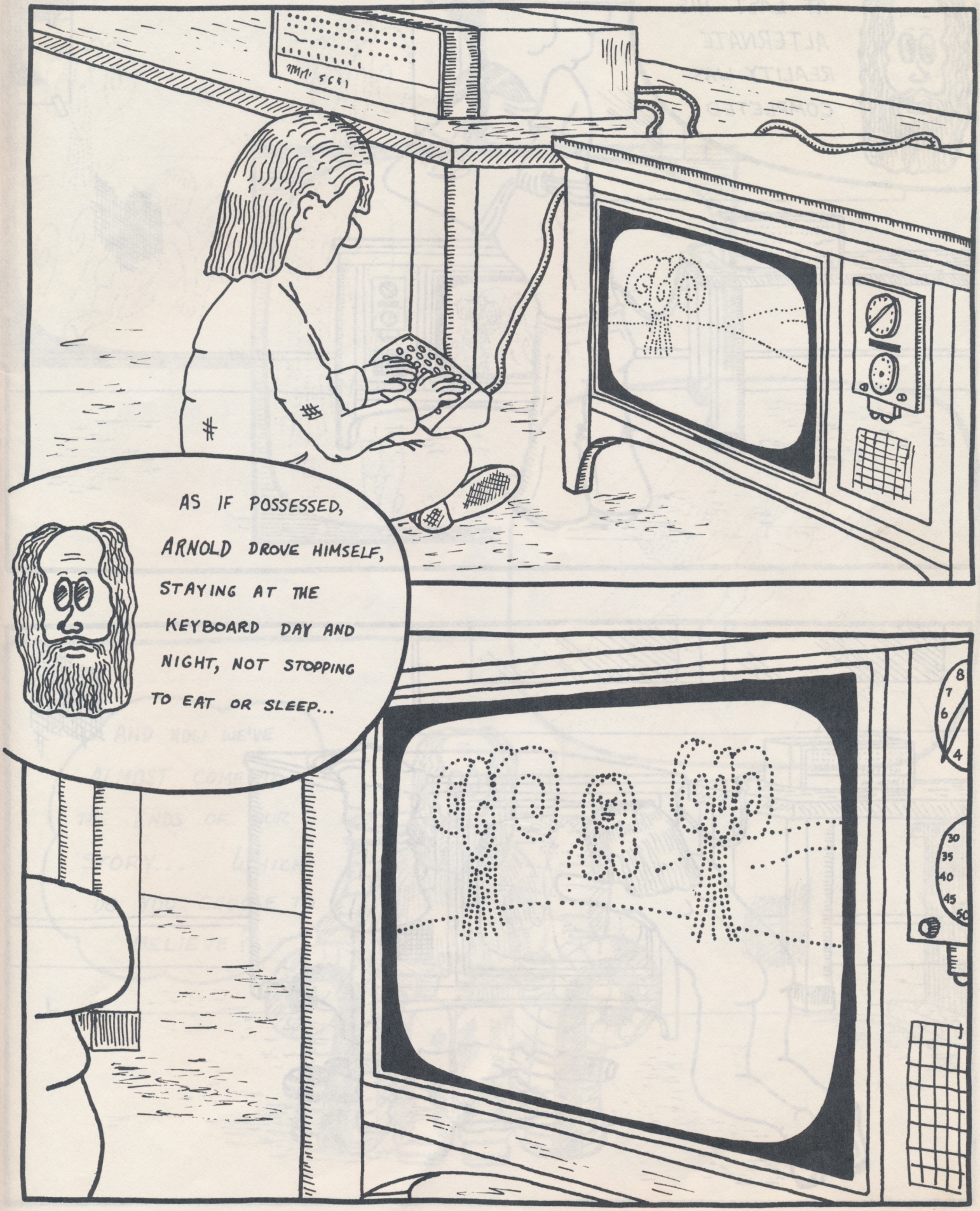
?
SLAM!
WHA...?
DO NOT DISTURB
?


an Altair.
out differently
COMPUTER
KIT MODEL
MITS

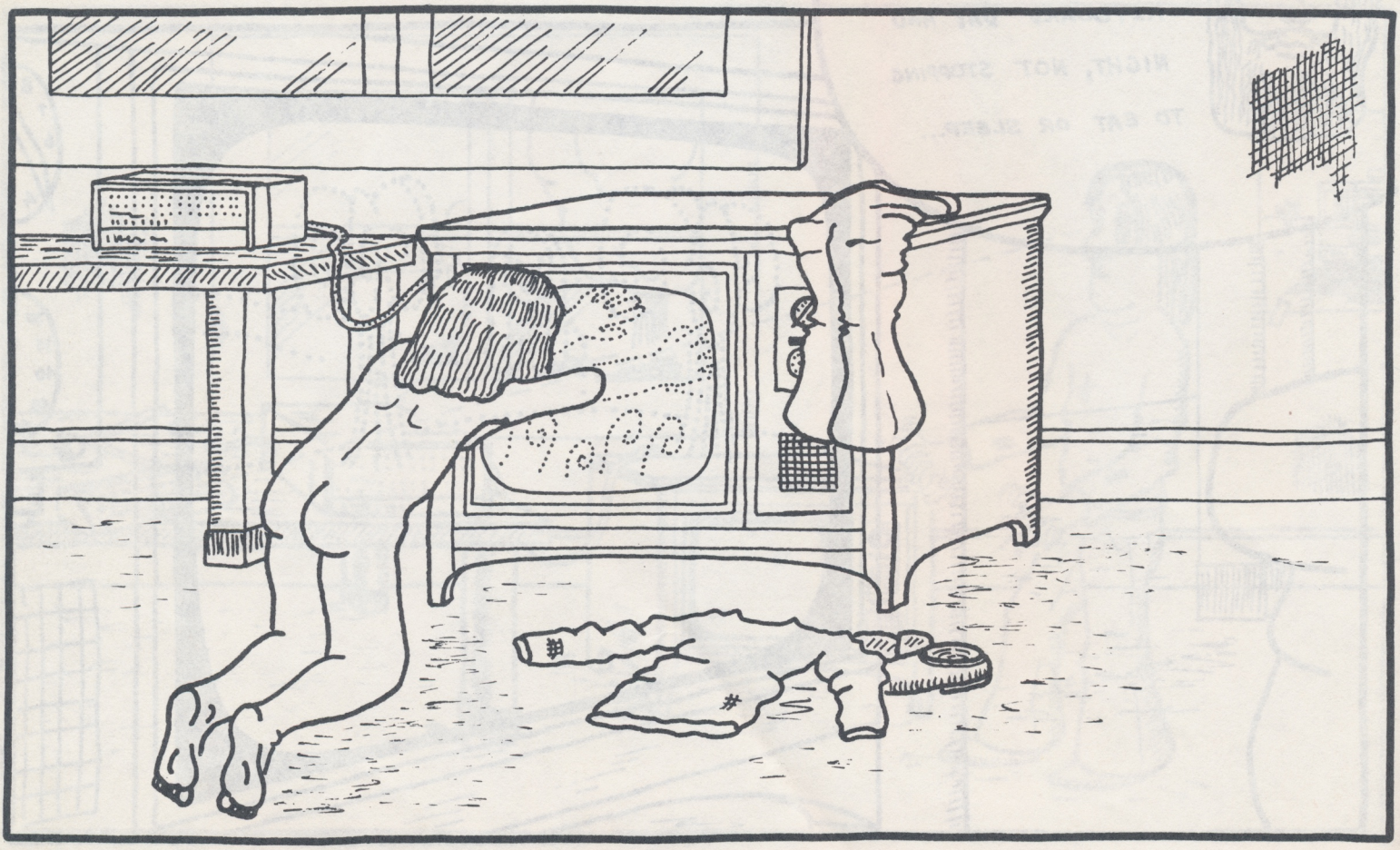


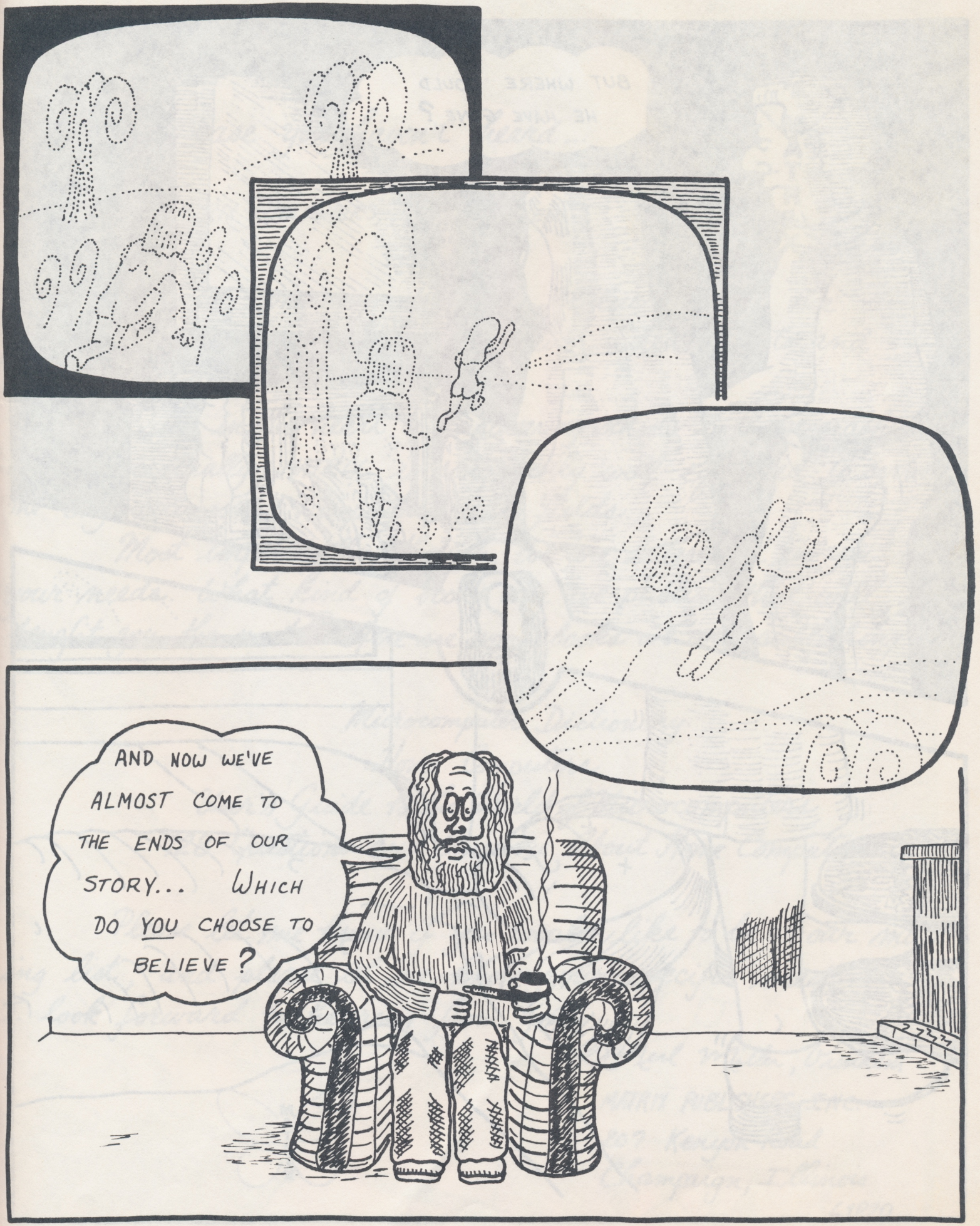

KITCH
Mayflower

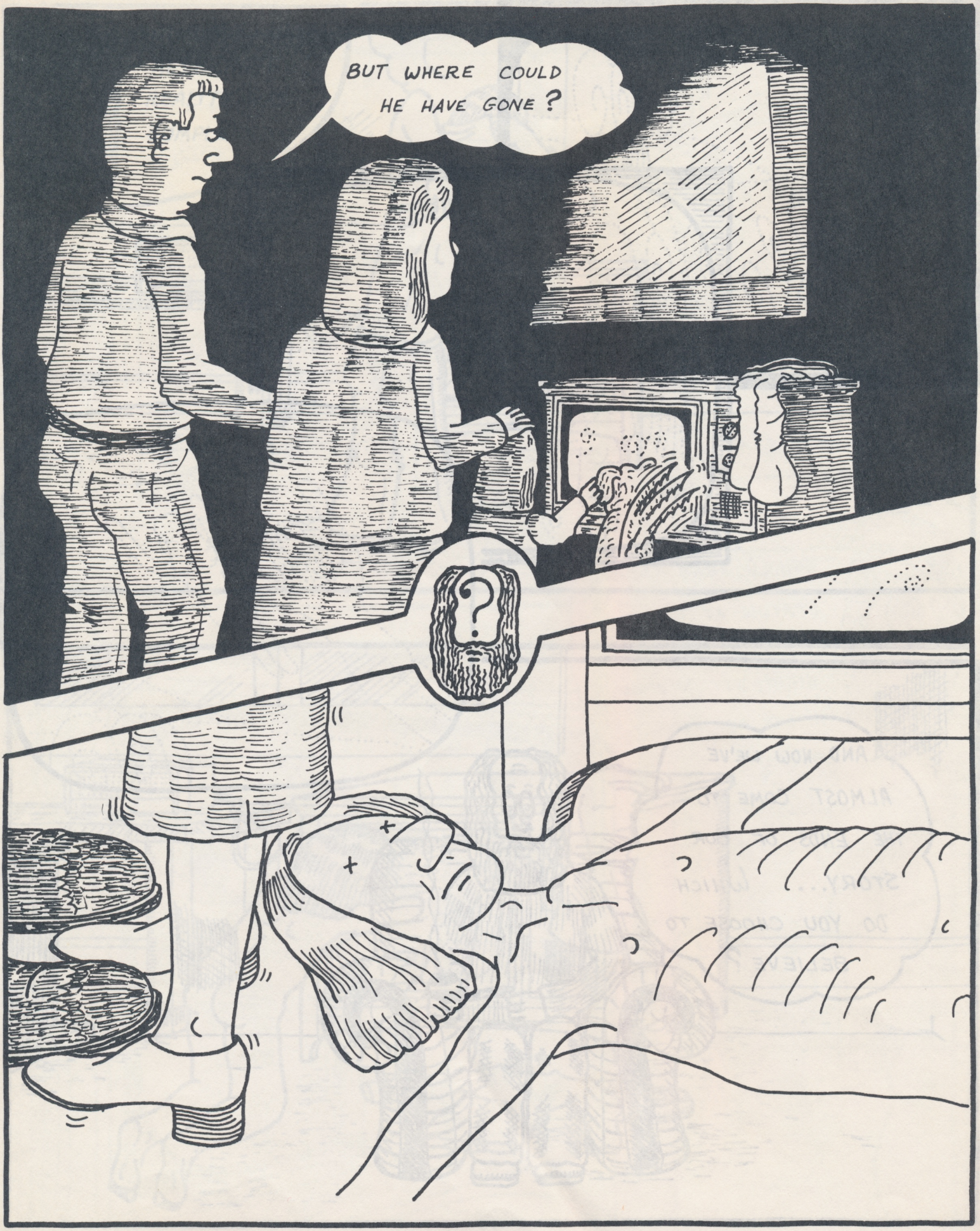



AS IF POSSESSED, ARNOLD DROVE HIMSELF, STAYING AT THE KEYBOARD DAY AND NIGHT, NOT STOPPING TO EAT OR SLEEP...

AT LAST HIS ALTERNATE REALITY WAS COMPLETED




AND NOW WE'VE ALMOST COME TO THE ENDS OF OUR STORY... WHICH DO YOU CHOOSE TO BELIEVE?


BUT WHERE COULD HE HAVE GONE?

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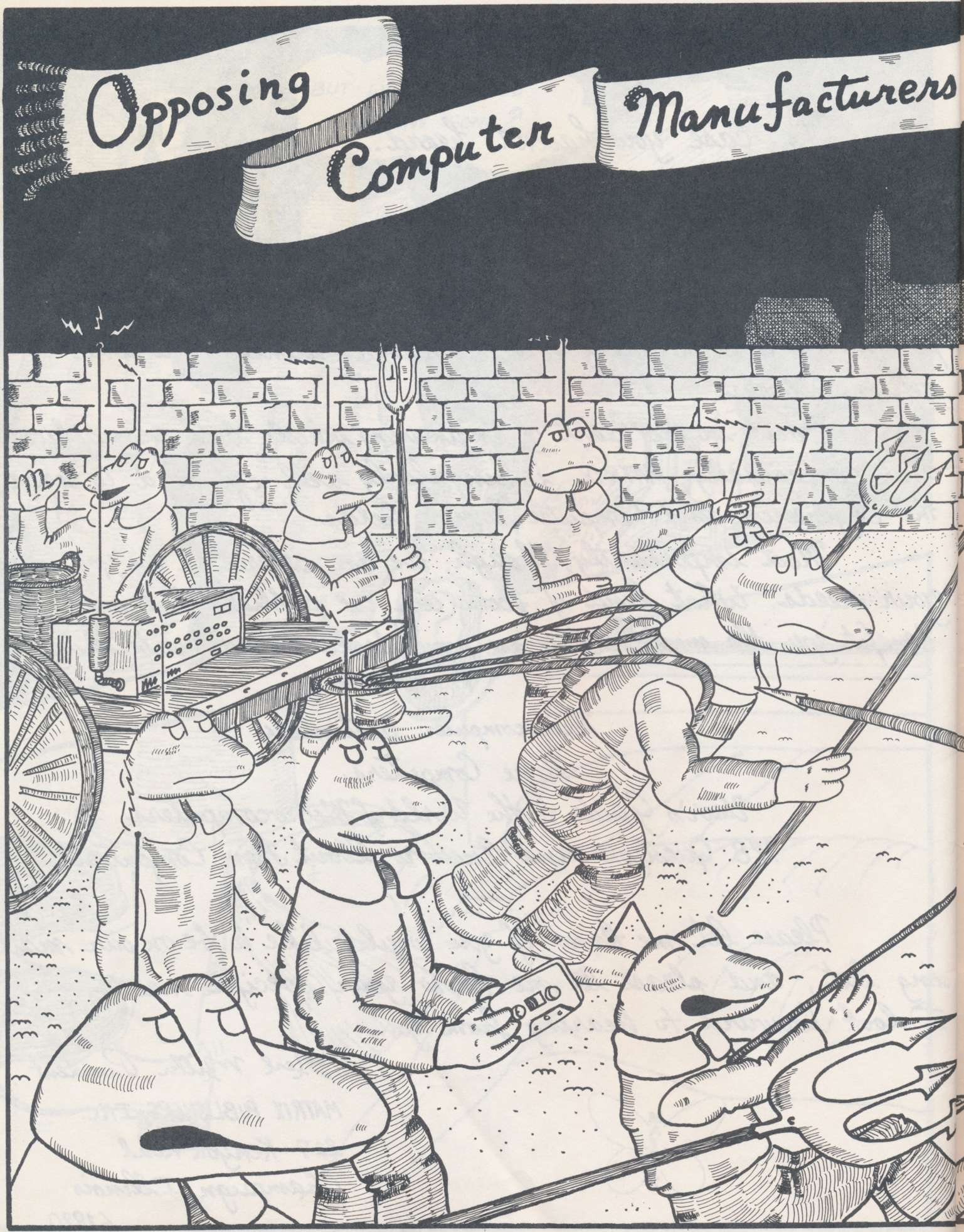
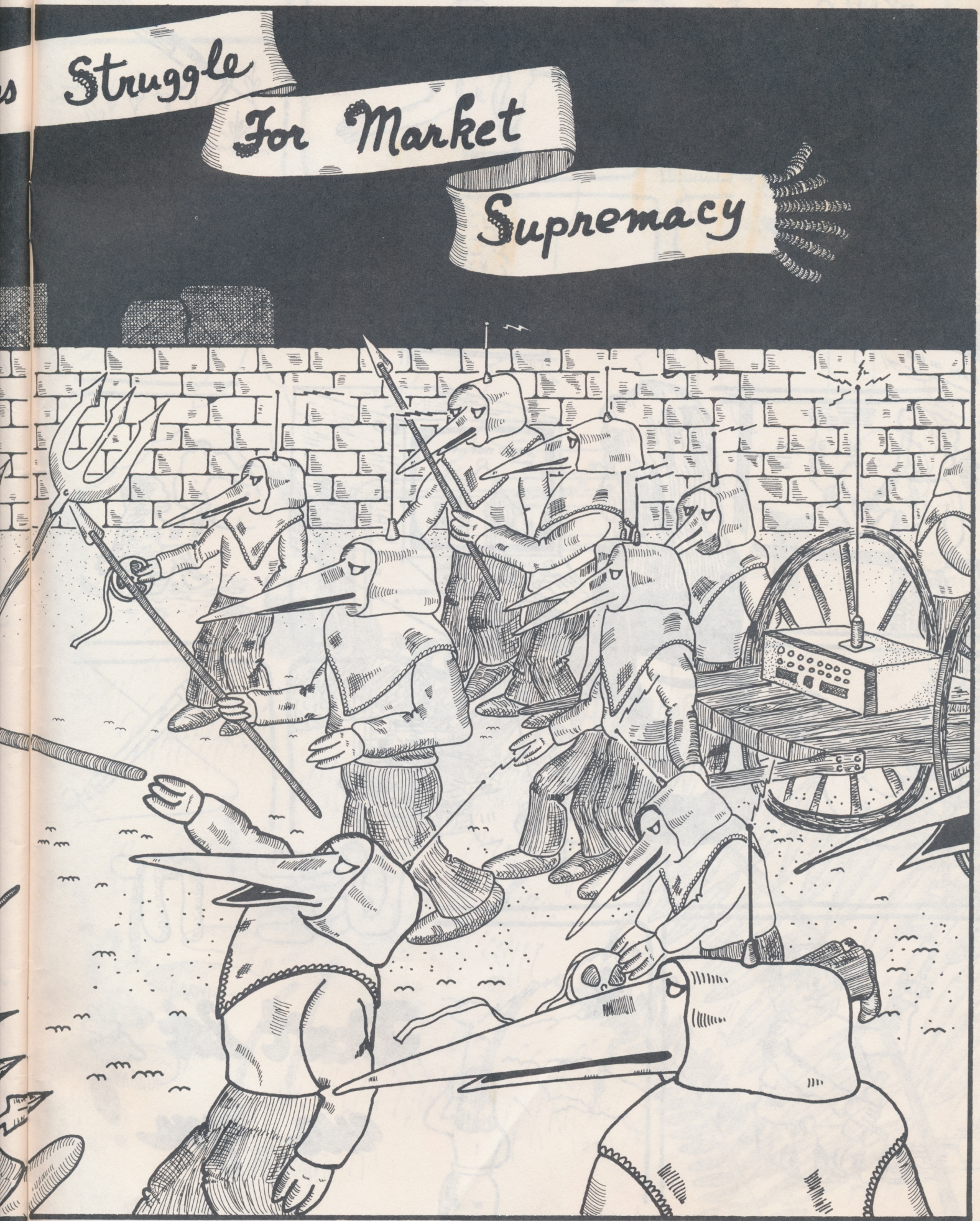
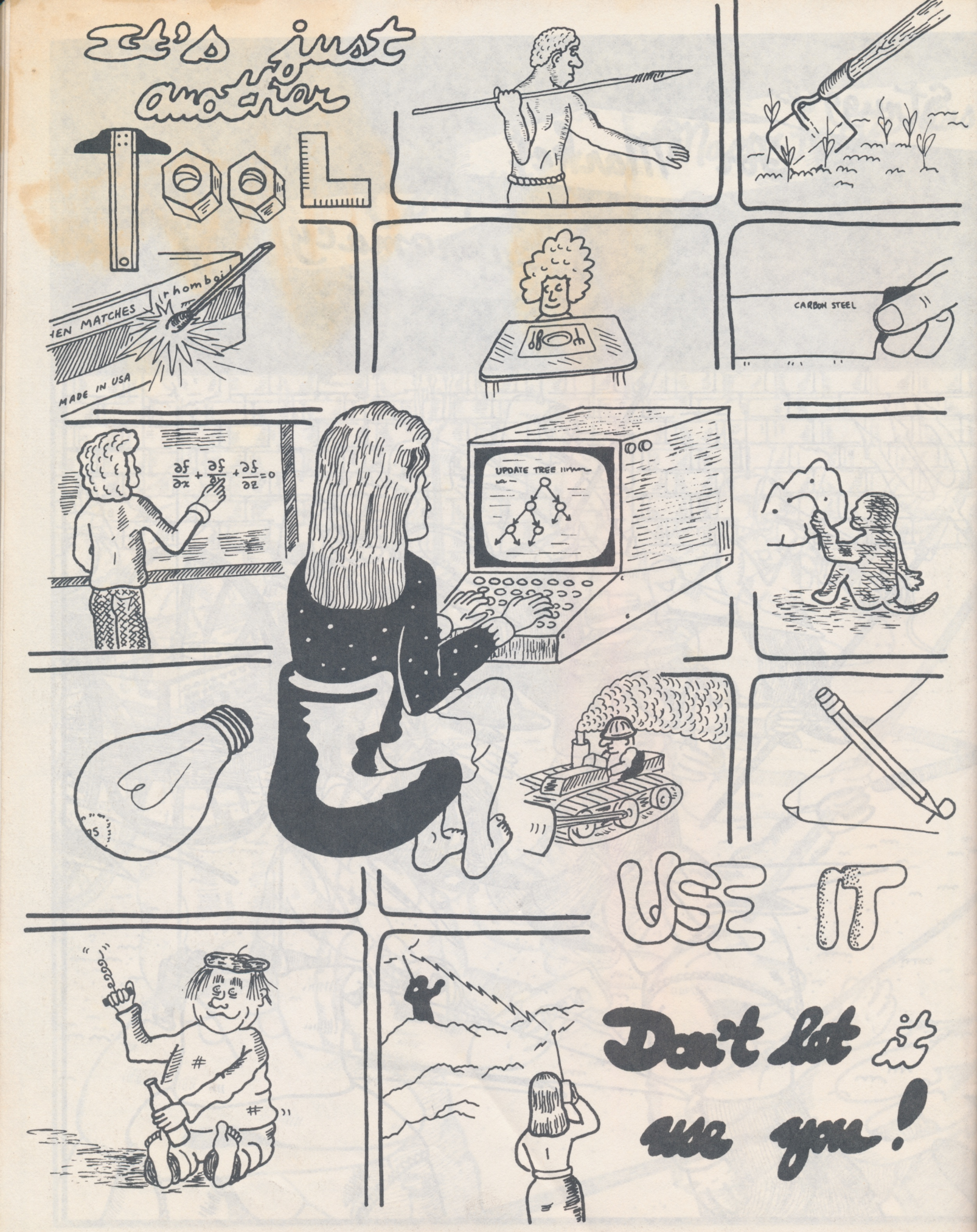

Opposing Computer Manufacturers


Struggle
For Market
Supremacy


It's just another
TOOL
rhombic
MADE IN USA
CARBON STEEL
UPDATE TREE
USE IT
Don't let it
use you!

BACKUS

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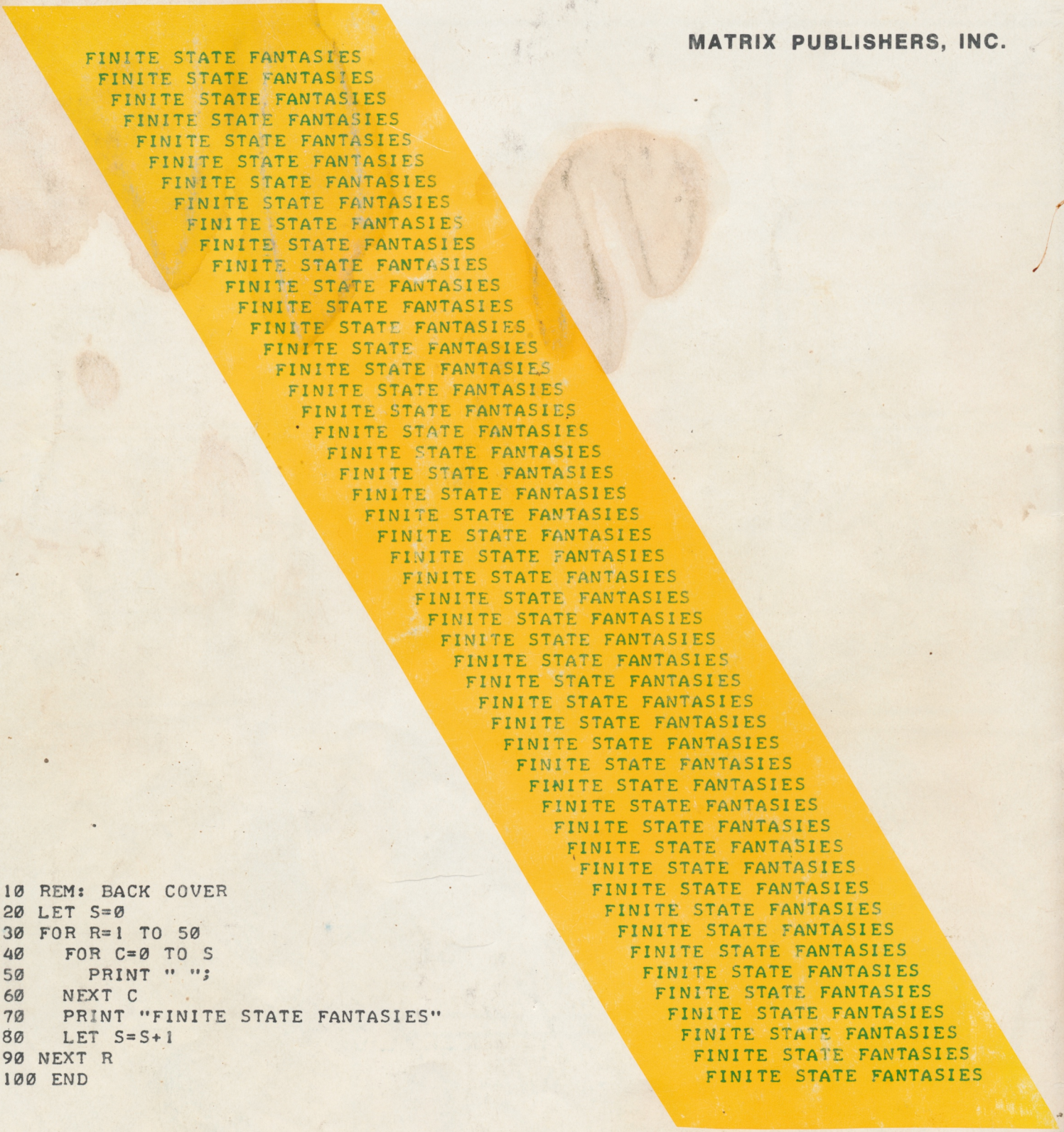


```
10 REM: BACK COVER
20 LET S=0
30 FOR R=1 TO 50
40   FOR C=0 TO S
50     PRINT " ";
60   NEXT C
70   PRINT "FINITE STATE FANTASIES"
80   LET S=S+1
90 NEXT R
100 END
```

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